Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

75¢

'Tinian and The Bomb': A must read. PAGE 3

US military is quietly spreading the pandemic in the Pacific. PAGE 8

Before taking off, Star Marianas Air's pilot Brandy Buzza, left, and pilot trainee Angel Concepcion Lagunay go through a preflight inspection at the Tinian International Airport last Saturday. The inspection gives the pilot and/or co-pilot a chance to check the plane before it goes airborne.

JUSTINE NAUTA

Eliminating the stereotype that only men can be pilots

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Picture this: A young girl who migrated from a small island in the Philippines to another small island, Tinian. After years of watching her family in the aviation business, she decides to take part in it too, making her the first

See PILOTS on Page 4

Volume XXX, Issue No. 192
MONDAY SEPTEMBER 28, 2020
www.saipantribune.com
www.facebook.com/saipantribune

WITH ONLY 2 DAYS LEFT BEFORE FISCAL YEAR ENDS

House rejects Senate budget

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

» Attao appoints 3 to conference committee

RELATED NEWS
- Senate OKs $96.47M budget; Manglona walks out of session.

PAGE 2

With an 18-2 vote, the House of Representatives rejected during yesterday's special session the Senate's version of the $96.47-million budget for fiscal year 2021, setting the stage for a conference committee that will sit down to hammer out a compromise budget version and, with only two days left before the fiscal year ends, there is a likelihood that the CNMI government may be forced to shut down—as required by law if no budget is enacted by Oct. 1.

See BUDGET on Page 4

ROADSIDE WAVING
The Substance Abuse, Addiction, and Rehabilitation Program, the HOPE Recovery Center, and members of the community gathered along the Beach Road/Atkins Kroll intersection last Friday to wave for recovery and strength in the spirit of National Recovery Month.

NEIL FAMA

CNMI posts 70th COVID-19 case

AT A GLANCE

As of 6pm, Sept. 27, 2020

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	2,235	51	2,286
Recovered	1,541	127	1,668
Active	528	51	579
Deaths	38	5	43
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			47,433

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	69	1	70
Deaths	2	0	2
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			19,345*

*Total count includes the number of persons tested on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. With guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CHCC has opted not to report active and recovered cases. The community-based testing has been temporarily suspended.

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Health Care Corp.

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A passenger on a United Airlines flight from Guam last Sept. 24 tested positive for COVID-19 upon arrival on

See 70TH on Page 4

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

USA Fanter wants final judgment vs IPI

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

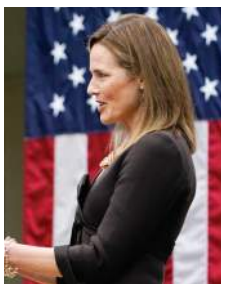
Pursuant to the recent judgment for a mechanic's lien against Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC in favor of USA Fanter Corp., the company is now asking for a final judgment for payment.

Last week, USA Fanter asked the District Court for the NMI to grant its summary judgment motion and enter a final judgment order in the

See USA on Page 4

INSIDE

BUSINESS
SURA Saipan's $10 buffet is back but, unlike before, its waitstaff will serve the food to customers.
PAGE 11



NATION
President Donald Trump has nominated Judge Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court.
PAGE 12

WORLD
Iraq's foreign minister arrives in Tehran for bilateral talks with senior Iranian officials.
PAGE 13

SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

Local

Senate OKs $96.47M budget; Manglona walks out of session

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Senate passed on its final reading during Saturday's special session its version of the government's budget bill for fiscal year 2021, allocating a total of $96.47 million, which the senators described as "creative, bold, untraditional, and very innovative," even as Sen. Paul A. Manglona (Ind-Rota) walked out of the session even before the voting started when no one seconded his offer for floor amendments.

Seven senators voted for the passage of House Bill 21-124 in the form of Senate Draft 2, with Manglona and Sen. Francisco Borja (R-Tinian) absent. Borja was excused for medical reasons.

Under the Senate's version, the proposed budget for the Judicial Branch is $4,849,331; for Legislative Branch $6,724,186; and executive $22,761,403. The proposed budget for Rota is $6,177,805, for Tinian and Aguiguan is $6,126,546; and for Saipan and Northern Islands Mayor offices and Saipan Municipal Council is $2,084,002.

Manglona argued that this bill relinquishes the Legislature's power as the second branch of the government and gives Gov. Ralph DLG Torres 100% of the Legislature's power of the purse.

"All we managed to do was make sure the Legislature did not get any funding reduction and ensured that no one can reprogram our legislative money while other government programs and public services were severely cut," he said.

By passing this budget as is, they are effectively removing the checks and balances of the government, he said. "We may as well rename the legislative branch of the CNMI as the Department of Legislation under the Office of the Governor. In other words, let's shut down this Legislature right now!" said Manglona as he then walked out of the chamber.

The first amendment that Manglona offered was meant to address the power situation of the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. His second amendment was to authorize the Rota mayor to reprogram $250,000 from various accounts under the First Senatorial District (Rota) to interisland medical referral program on Saipan. The third amendment was for the Retirement Fund suspending Public Law 20-10, similar to the intent of H. B. 21-76 to give retirees the $15 million annual casino license fee.

His last amendment proposes that no later than 90 days after the enactment of the budget bill, the Development Plan Advisory Committee established under the Casino License Agreement between the Commonwealth Lottery Commission and Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC shall submit to the House speaker and the Senate president a report on the status of project, issues of concern, and compliance with schedules and license requirements.

The House adopted last week the Senate's version of a House resolution that proposes $96.47 million in available revenue and resources for appropriation for government activities in fiscal year 2021. The Senate's version is $13.81 million more than what the House had adopted, which was only $82.65 million.

Last July 1, Torres submitted a revised revenue projection in the amount of $144.41 million. Of this amount, the governor approved $82.65 million for government appropriation.

Last July 29, the House adopted House concurrent resolution 21-2 authored by House Ways and Means chair Rep. Ivan Blanco (R-Saipan). The resolution basically concurs with Torres' revised budget proposal for fiscal year 2021 in the amount of $82.65 million.

During Saturday's special session, Sen. Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian), who chairs the Fiscal Affairs Committee, which handled the budget bill, said that "extreme and dire situations call for creative, bold, and never before seen action." That included identifying alternative revenue sources and tapping into accounts that has never been done before by the legislative body. Hofschneider said these were done under the guidance of Senate President Victor B. Hocog (R-Rota).

Hofscheider said he stands by the product that his committee worked tirelessly to ensure that essential employees remain at 80 hours as they continue to fight COVID-19; that other government employees maintain a work schedule of 64 hours; that the government has the flexibility to bring back furloughed employees once additional funding is available, among other things.

Under the Senate's version, the governor shall have unlimited authority to reprogram funds for fiscal year 2021 within the Executive Branch, but not including the Legislature, the Judiciary, and autonomous agencies. There will be no salary increases within the Executive Branch without the governor's approval.

Mondays will be designated as "austerity days" for the CNMI government. Due to the time difference between the CNMI and the U.S. mainland, the senators said it would be more conducive for government employees to work on Fridays instead of Mondays because the federal government is closed on Mondays in the CNMI.

The bill increased the House's version of the Senate and House Leadership Accounts from $143,722 to $300,000.

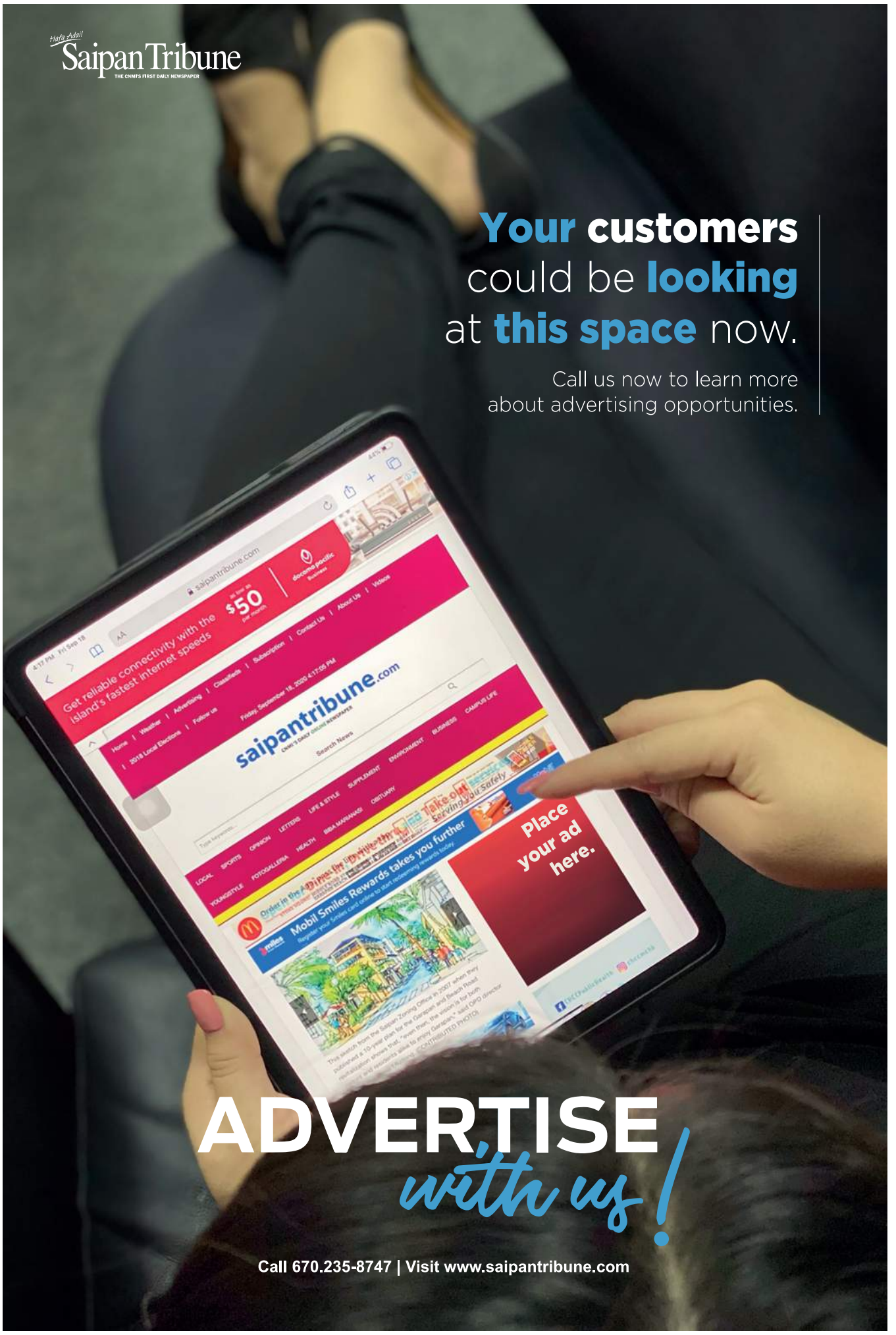
The Office of the Attorney General may charge fees for legal services provided to CNMI public corporations, autonomous agencies, the Department of Public Lands, the Division of Revenue and Taxation, the Bureau of Coastal and Environmental Quality, and the Office of Management and Budget; provided that the OAG shall not charge fees for legal services provided to divisions, offices, and line agencies within the Executive Branch.

Of the $4,556,164 appropriated to the Department of Public Lands, $533,865 shall be used to complete the Kastiyu Agricultural Homestead development on Tinian, the Kagman Farm Plots on Saipan, the Dugi & Gampapa Agricultural Homestead developments on Rota, and other agricultural homestead developments in the Northern Islands, including surveying, designing and other expenses related to agricultural homestead developments, and $1 million shall be transferred to the Marianas Public Land Trust.

The Compact Impact Fund in the amount of $750,000 shall go solely to the Northern Marianas College.

Before asking the clerk to make the roll call for the vote, Senate President Victor B. Hocog thanked Hofschneider and his committee members, legal counsel, fiscal analyst Dave Demapan, and all the legislative staff.

"I just hope that our counterpart [in the CNMI House of Representatives] will realize the importance of the Senate work," Hocog said.


Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Your customers could be looking at this space now.
Call us now to learn more about advertising opportunities.
Get reliable connectivity with the island's fastest internet speeds
$50
saipantribune.com
Place your ad here.
ADVERTISE with us!
Call 670.235-8747 | Visit www.saipantribune.com

'Tinian and The Bomb': A must read

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

It took Marianas historian and educator Don A. Farrell about 20 years to research, track down files, and go on a trip to the National Archives in Washington, D.C. to put together the story of his latest book, *Tinian and The Bomb*, which tells the story of how the United States detonated two nuclear bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan during World War II.

Farrell himself told the story of how he put together the intriguing pieces of the World War II puzzle during the history talks series of the Pacific Historic Parks last Tuesday. Readers of the book itself, *Tinian and The Bomb* should expect to read comprehensive information, insights and details about how the United States came up with the bombs. The book is an organized understanding of those unforgettable events in history and gives readers an enlightened perspective when they finish and put down the book.

"I received a message from the University of Guam in 1998, the year after I have left Guam and moved to Tinian. I was told there is a copy of the Tinian atomic bomb files in the National Archives in Washington, D.C. …I answered 'There cannot be such a thing' because nobody believed it existed," Farrell said. "I was fortunate to receive a grant from the CNMI Humanities Council to go and find them…and they were there and I brought [copies of] them home. After years of translating, transcribing, and speaking to the people involved with the project, we were able to publish the book, *Tinian and the Bomb* which is a very unique story."

Farrell starts the book answering why the United States got involved in the production of atomic bombs and, closer to home, Tinian's role in the mission to denotate the bombs.

"German experimental physicist Otto Hahn in his studies accidentally broke in half an atom of uranium, not really knowing what had happened. He worked together with his colleagues and he discovered nuclear fusion.

The B29 plane that was named *Enola Gay* after Col. Paul Tibbets' mother is seen here at the Tinian airport during World War II.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

In the process of splitting the uranium atom in half, not only did he end up with two other equal parts but they also released large amount of energy in the form of neutrons that could split other uranium in the atom, leading into a nuclear reaction. Scientists saw all the opportunities that might be presented and one of them was, of course, creating inexpensive nuclear energy…an uncontrollable nuclear reaction which might end up creating an atomic bomb," he said.

"Germany immediately began their atomic bomb project and many of the scientists that were working in Germany became quite frightened with Mr. Hitler and his attitude toward Jewish scientists, as he referred to physics as 'Jewish science.' They left Germany and Austria as those areas were being occupied by Hitler and moved to England, Canada, and the U.S. They knew what was happening in Germany and fearful in the event that, if Germans actually figured out how to make a bomb out of uranium, they would use it to their advantage to conquer the world."

Several of these scientists, including Dr. Leo Slizard, visited Albert Einstein who was in the United States, to convince him to sign a letter to President Franklin D. Roosevelt to warm him of the German science that was developing, "based on fear that if Hitler got it first, he would use it against the free world. …Word of his letter got out and more people urged the President to at least take a look at the problem of uranium and could it be developed into a bomb. ...Although the United Stated was not involved during World War II, Roosevelt agreed that it was worth studying," he said. "…A National Defense Center was created and it brought together America's top scientists. …They first conducted actual nuclear reaction within the stadium of the University of Chicago and proved that nuclear reaction was possible and this could be developed into an atomic bomb and this information was bought to President Roosevelt. The Manhattan Project was established for research and development. …Factories were built in Tennessee for the refinement process. …Manufacturing was held in a huge facility in Hanford, Washington."

Tinian and The Bomb author and Tinian resident Don Farrell took 20 years to decode and transcribe the Tinian bomb files he retrieved from the National Archives in Washington, D.C.

CONTIBUTED PHOTO

By this time, the United States has already developed a long-range bomber called XB29. The concept of a four-engine long range bomber was actually developed in 1935 when America became concerned with the possibility of an invasion by a foreign force at their southern border with Mexico or northern borders with Canada. The war in the Pacific was also developing.

"Then came [the question;] where would we launch this bomb? ...Finding a place where they can be used in the Pacific against Japan became the question. Adm. Ernest J. King was quite convinced that the capture of the Mariana Islands, particularly Saipan, Tinian, and Guam were key to the…war in the Pacific because, from the Marianas they can turn north and go directly toward Japan…," Farrell said.

"…Tinian was obviously the right place for the atomic bomb project. Saipan only had one runway and it was overcrowded [and had] no more space for another group of B29 special group that was being trained for handling an atomic bomb. …The 6th naval construction brigade went to work—13,000 men, millions of tons of dynamite, hundreds of dump trucks and huge equipment began turning Tinian into the largest airbase in the world."

Parts of the first atomic bomb, called Little Boy, was brought to Tinian aboard the USS *Indianapolis* from San Francisco. When it arrived on Tinian, discussions on the final days of the project ensued. "The bomb was completely assembled, taken to the loading pit, which was just a concrete hole in the ground, and loaded in the *Enola Gay*. … The mission to Hiroshima had seven planes involved—one plane flew to Iwo Jima… another plane, a C-54, left for Iwo Jima and with an atomic bomb loading crew to stand by if anything happened to *Enola Gay* along the way," Farrell said.

"But *Enola Gay* went straight right to Hiroshima dropped the bomb on Aug. 6, 1945, at 9:02am Tokyo time and flew directly back to Tinian at 2:30pm. …The second mission, bombing Nagasaki, was done on Aug. 9, 1945," he added.

Farrell recounted that there were many challenges along the way of writing his book, like decoding the Tinian bomb files. "There were copies of original messages that had been sent back and forth. …People everywhere talking about the atomic bomb project but I could not understand them because they were speaking in codes. I was very fortunate to get researchers and they were able to help me decode messages. I reorganized them by dates and names…." he said.

"I read many books and became concerned about the presentation because of the negative publicity during the Cold War. I finally sent a letter to my dad who landed in Iwo Jima and Okinawa and I asked, 'What do you think about the bombs, Dad?' He immediately replied, 'Those damn bombs saved my life!' …This is not a philosophical story, this is a war story and that what I decided to write over a period of 20 years."

Tinian and The Bomb is available in hard copy and Kindle version on Amazon.com and in Bestseller along Middle Road.

Ask USCIS a question

Do you have questions about the Immigrant Investor Program, also known as the EB-5 program? U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services would like to hear from you.

If you have questions about the EB-5 program, we invite you to submit questions by emailing public.engagement@uscis.dhs.gov by Oct. 9 at 4pm Eastern**.** Put "EB-5 Question" in the subject line. We will not address case-specific questions. USCIS will release an online presentation to provide program updates and respond to pre-submitted questions. ***(PR)***

The most common identification of a leak is SMELL.
If you smell gas, there is a possibility of a fire or explosion.

If the odor is STRONG:
1. Shut off gas if possible
2. DO NOT light matches or cigarettes
3. DO NOT operate switches or electrical appliances
4. Get everyone out of the building
5. Call the Fire Department from a neighbor's phone
6. Call Wushin LPGas Emergency Number

LP GAS WUSHIN
Since1983 Committed to Safety Excellence

For your LPGas needs, please call 322-7415 or 322-8733
Open from 8:00am – 5:00pm Monday to Friday | 8:00am – 2:00pm Saturday

Have Medicaid Dental Insurance?

- We would love to see you! No long waits, and Walk-ins always welcome. **Kind & Gentle Team!**
- We treat our patients like family. Join us for a cup of coffee today. Best AirCon and free Wi-Fi!
- **Hawaii Dental Service (HDS), StayWell, TakeCare, CIGNA & Calvos insurances also accepted!**

AWARD-WINNING DENTISTS
DR. NELSON KRUM
DR. RICHARD ARBUCKLE

Paradise Dental Spa
Middle Road, Gualo Rai
234-4040
paradisedentalsaipan@gmail.com
www.paradisedentalspa.com

United to be 1st airline to offer COVID-19 testing

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

In hopes to start having customers fly again, United Airlines announced last Sept. 24 that they will offer COVID-19 tests to their customers, making them the first U.S. carrier to offer testing.

United customers who are traveling between San Francisco and Hawaii will have the option to get tested before they board their flight. This will start on Oct. 15. A negative result will allow passengers to skip the mandatory 14-day quarantine that Hawaii requires.

Though this is good news for passengers who fly between San Francisco and Hawaii, both Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. chief executive officer Esther Muña and Governor's COVID-19 Task Force chair Warren Villagomez said it's not applicable in the CNMI.

Muña said the protocols for the CNMI is different than Hawaii's. Villagomez says that testing on the first and fifth day will continue as is in order to catch the positives and isolate them as soon as they identify them.

According to a United statement, Toby Enqvist, chief customer officer at United Airlines, said this new COVID-19 testing program is another way to help their customers meet their destinations' entry requirements safely and conveniently. Enqvist says that United is looking into "quickly" expanding customer testing to other destinations and U.S. airports later this year to suit their cleaning and safety measures.

The pilot program will launch at the same time that United begins to intensify service to Hawaii come Oct. 15, including the resumption of service between San Francisco and Lihue and additional flights between San Francisco and Maui and Kona. Additionally, United offers daily service between San Francisco and Honolulu, Maui, and Kona.

According to United, last July, they partnered with GoHealth Urgent Care Rapid Test to test its international flight with San Francisco International Airport. GoHealth is using the same platform that CHCC is using, which is the Abbott ID Now COVID-19 testing, and are the ones who are conducting the on-site testing.

Customers who are flying through United and want to get tested will have to schedule their visits online in advance for the on-sight testing facility that will be in the international terminal. Customers will receive their results in approximately 15 minutes.

"We are excited about expanding our partnership with United and continuing to support their proactive safety measures," said Todd Latz, CEO of GoHealth Urgent Care. "Our on-site, real-time testing for passengers is yet another example of GoHealth's nationwide efforts to fight the spread of COVID-19 and ensure a safer return to normal activities and business operations."

PILOTS

From Page 1

student that Star Marianas Air, Inc. will be helping with her training.

Angel Concepcion Lagunay, 17, a Tinian Junior-Senior High School alumna who is currently pursuing a degree in business management and accounting at the Northern Marianas College, recently took her first step in an aviation career by trying to obtain what one would call a beginner license, a private pilot license, or PPL. She starts her training with SMA on Oct. 1 and, after getting her PPL, she will then need to obtain an instrument rating license, and then finally a commercial license.

SMA pilot captain Brandy Buzza said that having a PPL will only allow you to carry passengers such as friends, family, and co-workers, but you cannot fly for paid compensation or for hire.

Lagunay actually comes from a family of pilots, most of them being her uncles. Her aunt has been on the business side of things, in this case, at Star Marianas. "I was really inspired by her, how she does business, and her husband as well, is a pilot. I was really inspired by how they work here," said Lagunay.

She hopes to be an inspiration to other young aviators who are interested in learning how to fly. Right now, globally, there aren't many female pilots, but Lagunay and Buzza hope to be an inspiration for younger females to eliminate the stereotype that only men become pilots.

Buzza stated that Lagunay will be flying for as long as six months or as little as two months if Lagunay's schedule fits with hers. Once Lagunay is done with her training, an examiner from the Federal Aviation Administration will certify Lagunay with her PPL.

Lagunay says that after she gets all three pilot certificates (PPL, instrument rating license, and the commercial pilot license), she will continue to fly for SMA and, if possible, conduct training for future students who are interested in getting their pilot license.

Last Saturday, *Saipan Tribune* had the opportunity to tag along with Buzza and Lagunay to witness her first take-off and landing. Buzza had Lagunay fly over and around Tinian for a practice flight that consisted of learning how to conduct a preflight examination, take-off, talking to air traffic control, the controls of the plane, the airplane's brakes, landing, etc.

According to a press release from SMA, Lagunay received approval from the Department of Homeland Security to begin training to become a pilot. SMA has agreed to assist her in training come Oct. 1. According to Buzza, SMA is not opening up a pilot school but is only helping Lagunay with her pilot license by letting her use SMA planes for training purposes. It is solely on the captain's day off, and if the students' schedule permits them to also go through training.

70TH

From Page 1

Saipan, raising the CNMI's cumulative total to 70.

According to a statement from the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., the passenger was identified through travel screening and was confirmed positive for COVID-19 through testing upon arrival. The passenger was immediately brought to the isolation facility at Kanoa Resort in Susupe.

CHCC has already conducted contact tracing for the most immediate contacts, which include passengers on the same flight.

As of Sept. 27, the CNMI has seen little to no evidence of community transmission. Its recent COVID-19 positive cases have been passengers—raising the CNMI's cumulative total one at a time. In the neighboring island of Guam, its number of COVID-19-related deaths is now at 43, with the death last Sept. 26 of a 53-year-old male with underlying health conditions that were intensified by COVID-19. He was admitted to Guam Memorial Hospital last Aug. 30 after testing positive for COVID-19. Almost four weeks later, he was pronounced deceased at approximately 8:57pm, according to the Joint Information Center.

Guam Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero expressed deep sadness as Guam saw at least one fatality almost every other day throughout the month of September. "We have mourned and grieved and shared moments of silence—some days more so than others. It is with great sadness to announce we have lost another person to COVID-19," said Leon Guerrero. She pointed out that the latest case is more than just a "data point" or "statistic," and should be remembered for the life he lived. "To those he cherished, we offer our deepest sympathies and condolences in this most difficult time," she said.

Leon Guerrero stressed that everyone plays a part in combating COVID-19 and that actions not only affect them (community members) but those around them as well. "We must remain committed to keeping our community safe and healthy. That is the only way we can win," said Leon Guerrero.

USA

From Page 1

amount of $2,089,345.28 against IPI.

Colin Thompson, who represents USA Fanter, issued the request for the court to grant partial summary judgement in the amount established through the mechanic's lien hearings.

The summary judgment motion came following District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona's ruling in favor of USA Fanter's petition for a mechanic's lien that they applied for back in February 2020.

Following the bench trial in June, Manglona citied a preponderance of evidence in finding USA Fanter to be entitled to a mechanic's lien in the amount of $2,089,345.28.

Thompson said that IPI has only paid $300,000 of the construction contract between USA Fanter and IPI, that USA Fanter is entitled to summary judgement in the amount of $2,089,345.28. Thompson said USA Fanter has met its burden.

"The evidence in the record makes clear that IPI executed the construction contract promising to pay USA Fanter for work completed and materials supplied to the project, and IPI breached its obligations to make required payments. IPI's breach of the construction contract has resulted in damages to USA Fanter," he said.

USA Fanter sued IPI for allegedly refusing to pay $2,089,345 for landscaping services at IPI's hotel-casino project back in 2019. USA Fanter asked the court to hold IPI liable to pay $2.08 million in contract damages. The company also sought payment for interest and attorney's fees.

BUDGET

From Page 1

Only Reps. Donald M. Manglona (Ind-Rota) and Antonio San Nicolas Borja (R-Tinian) voted against rejecting the Senate's version.

After the vote, House Speaker Blas Jonathan Attao (R-Saipan) immediately announced the appointment of Reps. Ivan A. Blanco, (R-Saipan), House floor leader John Paul Sablan (R-Saipan), and Joel C. Camacho (R-Saipan) to the conference committee. Attao said he will appoint another as an alternate committee member. Senate President Victor B. Hocog (R-Rota) has to appoint three senators too to the conference committee.

A conference committee refers to a joint committee appointed by the House speaker and the Senate president to resolve disagreements on a specific bill.

Blanco, who chairs the House Ways and Means Committee, said in a later interview that they await Hocog's appointees to the conference committee. As soon as Hocog names his appointees, they are going to sit down to come up with a compromise bill, he added.

Blanco said they have more commonalities than differences with the Senate's version and the House's version. "So what's [going to] happen is, all the actions that they took, we'll sit down with them and say, okay, this is our position. This is what we agree with. This is what we do not agree with. What is yours? Then we go back and forth until we come to a decision," he said.

Blanco said the last time there was a conference committee was for the fiscal year 2019 budget.

He said they understand that Rota and Tinian have municipalities to run and the House did its best to adequately fund them, yet the numbers they saw in the Senate's version were unreasonable. In the proposed Senate version, he pointed out, there was an increase of $1.8 million for Tinian and $1.3 million for Rota, or a large $3.1 million increase over the House's version.

Blanco said Saipan's municipal budget was increased too, but only by $247,000. "So when you compare what the House passed to what the Senate is considering, that's a ratio of 12 to 1 in terms of what the First and Second Districts were allotted compared to the third Senatorial District (Saipan)," Blanco said. "Based on this information, we do not feel confident that we can approve the Senate version of the budget if this case remains unresolved."

In the House version that it passed last Aug. 5, representatives took the $82 million that the governor identified as the net total available for appropriation and they stayed within that figure. "That's a balanced budget," Blanco said.

He said they wish they could have given more to certain areas but they had to make tough decisions. In the end, he said, the House's balanced budget accounted for the government's operations and its debts.

Blanco said they did this while not touching about $13 million in earmarks that the governor had set aside for Group Health Life Insurance, Solid Waste, Marianas Visitors Authority, and Marianas Public Land Trust. Blanco said these earmarks were not included in the governor's proposed figure of $82,656,213 for the net expenditure budget for fiscal year 2021.

By identifying $82 million, Blanco said, the governor set the cap for all intents and purposes. By removing these earmarks in the Senate version of the budget, the Senate reduced $13 million by 25%, which means they have $3.25 million less to pay for these obligations.

By appropriating the entire $144 million gross amount that was provided by the governor that includes the earmarks, the Senate appears to be exceeding the working cap and underfunding the original earmarks, he added.

"We feel bad that the possibility of a government shutdown exists, if we do not see eye to eye on the Senate version but we cannot pass an unbalanced budget or use funds we really do not have," he said.

Blanco assured that they will work hard and "burn the midnight oil" if need be, to have a budget that satisfies both legislative chambers on the governor's desk for his consideration as soon as possible. "We may not agree with the current budget proposal but we will work together to avert a shutdown," he added.

Last Saturday, the Senate passed its version in the budget bill that proposes $96.47 million in available revenue and resources for fiscal year 2021.

The House adopted last week the Senate's version of a House resolution that proposes the same $96.47 million in available revenue and resources for appropriation for government activities in fiscal year 2021. The Senate's version is $13.81 million more than what the House had adopted in the amount of $82.65 million.

Last July 1, Torres submitted a revised revenue projection in the amount of $144.41 million. Of this amount, the governor approved $82.65 million for government appropriation.

Torres welcomes lifting of travel restrictions on Chinese visitors

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres welcomed the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's lifting of restrictions on non-U.S. citizens from traveling to the United States if they are coming from mainland China and a few other countries.

"It's a good thing that it's lifted," said Torres during a recent radio news briefing. He was quick to clarify, though, that the CNMI needs to make sure that any and all passengers coming from China are screened beforehand and that they do not carry the COVID-19 virus with them when entering the Commonwealth.

"Now that is lifted, it's our obligation to make sure that we continue the effort of testing at the border and the requirements to make sure that COVID-19 is not transmitted here in our community," he said.

Torres also reminded the public that no governor has the authority to stop planes or schedule flights or airlines from coming into the United States, including its territories.

Last Sept. 14, U.S. acting secretary of Homeland Security Chad Wolfe lifted the restrictions of arrivals into the United States of most individuals, who are from mainland China and some other countries. Those restrictions exempted U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents. The term "United States" also includes the CNMI, Guam, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and American Samoa.

Aside from those coming from mainland China, Wolf also terminated the arrival restrictions on flights carrying persons who had recently traveled from Iran, the countries of the Schengen Area (European Union), the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Brazil.

For China, the arrival restrictions remain in place for those coming from Hong Kong and Macau.

For the United Kingdom, excluded from termination or arrival restrictions are its overseas territories outside of Europe.

Last Jan. 31, President Donald J. Trump signed a presidential proclamation that temporarily suspended such entry into the U.S from listed counties.

Joeten Motors donates car to Rotary Club golf tourney

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Joeten Motors Co. recently donated a Honda Insight EX as a hole-in-one prize for the Rotary Club of Saipan's Goodwill Golf Classic at the LaoLao Bay Golf Resort west course.

Rotary's popular fundraising event, Las Vegas Night, which was supposed to take place at Saipan Vegas this year, was cancelled due to COVID-19 restriction on social gathering and social distancing. Rotary Club president Sonya Dancoe pointed out that a golf tournament is suitable since social distancing will be easily achievable.

Rotary Club member and Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan F&B director Das Krishnan said they are expecting 120 players for the tournament. The registration fee is $120.

Krishnan said that they are looking at approximately $80,000 worth of prizes. This includes three cars that are being donated by Triple J Motors, Atkins Kroll Saipan, and Joeten Motors as hole-in-one prizes, as well as two $5,000 hole-in-one prizes donated by McDonald's Saipan and Guam and Pacifica Insurance Underwriters, Inc.

Registration for the golf tournament is extended to Friday, Sept. 25. Registration forms are available at Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan and Laolao Bay Golf & Resort.

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2ND Floor Arrival Bldg.
PO BOX 501055 SAIPAN MP 96950
Phone: (1-670) 237-6500/1 Fax: (1-670) 234-5962
E-Mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com
Website: www.cpa.gov.mp

NOTICE OF INVITATION FOR BID
ADVERTISING CONCESSION AT THE TINIAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Project No.: CPA-IFB-003-20
CPA Concession No.: TAD-2020-01–02

Notice is hereby given that the Commonwealth Ports Authority (the "CPA") is accepting sealed bids, subject to the terms and conditions of the Invitation for Bid (the "IFB"), and other contract provisions, for bids from firms, companies, and/or corporations for Advertising Opportunities at the Tinian International Airport.

The IFB will be issued and available for pick-up beginning September 16, 2020, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday to Thursday, at the Administration Office, 2nd Floor, Arrival Building, Saipan International Airport. CPA offices are closed every Friday for austerity reasons and also on holidays. The IFB includes layouts and requirements. All responses to this IFB shall also take into account any and/or all costs that will be charged to the bidder awarded the contract for the project. Prospective bidders will be required to pay an administrative fee of $100.00 for costs associated with handling and consideration of the bid.

Questions and/or clarification concerning this project shall be in writing and sent to the attention of the Executive Director through email at cpa.admin@pticom.com with copy to Joy Ann DeLeon Guerrero at joydlg@cpa.gov.mp no later than September 30, 2020.

All bids shall be sealed and marked on the cover package outside as follows: **"INVITATION FOR BID SUBMISSION: CONFIDENTIAL, ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITIES, COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY CPA-IFB-003-20."** One (1) original and two (2) copies of the bid must be submitted no later than 2:00 p.m. Chamorro Standard Time, October 20, 2020, to the Authority Administration Section, Office of the Executive Director, 2nd Floor, Arrival Building, Saipan International Airport.

Bids will be opened on October 20, 2020, at 3:00p.m. at the Conference Room, 2nd Floor, Departure Building, Saipan International Airport. Bids are not required to include a prepaid minimum concession fee. The concessions are for the right to advertise at certain designated locations within the Tinian International Airport for a period of two (2) years and requires the concessionaire to operate such concession to the satisfaction of the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason, if in its sole opinion to do so, would be in CPA's best interest. CPA further reserves the right to waive any defects in said bids if in its sole opinion to do so would be in CPA's best interest. All bids shall become property of the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 20 – 040
Opening Date: September 16, 2020
Closing Date: September 29, 2020

POSITION TITLE:	**Dispatch Operator**
DEPARTMENT:	**Chief of Administration/Customer Service/Call Center**
LOCATION:	**Saipan, Northern Marianas Islands, USA**
ANNUAL SALARY:	**$16,742.00 per annum, Exempt**
CONTRACT:	**Not Contracted**
POSITION(S):	**Two (2)**

The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Chief of Administration or his/her designee.

Duties:
- Monitors radio communications in order to dispatch crews for troubleshooting and for related service calls.
- Receives incoming calls reporting complaints or issues related to water, sewer or power utilities; provides general customer service; and routes service calls to appropriate resource.
- Organizes and maintains file systems and pertinent records.
- Performs data entry; maintains and updates logs and dispatch related documentation.
- Prepares and maintains requisitions.
- Follows up with customers to provide basic information, status updates, and to verify customer's experience and any remaining service needs.
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

Minimum Requirements:
Education: High School Diploma or GED or ABE Program AS and up to 1 year of customer service experience.
Knowledge of: Customer service principles; Basic recordkeeping principles; Radio communications equipment procedures; Modern office technology.
Skills in: Providing customer service; Monitoring and utilizing radio communications and equipment; receiving and routing service or problem calls; entering, updating and maintaining data; organizing and maintaining filing systems and records; preparing and updating logs, records and related documentation; performing follow up calls to ensure adequate service provision; utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

Applicants may be tested. Subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: Submit a completed CUC Employment Application, resume, and applicable supporting documents to the CUC Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan. Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota may submit their documents to their respective CUC Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer
P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950-1220 U.S.A.
Tel. No. (670) 664-4282 Fax (670) 235-5131

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 20 – 039
Opening Date: September 21, 2020
Closing Date: October 2, 2020

POSITION TITLE:	**Laboratory Analyst**
DEPARTMENT:	**Water & Wastewater Laboratory**
LOCATION:	**Saipan, Northern Marianas Islands, USA**
ANNUAL SALARY:	**$40,084.00 - $54,113.00 per annum, Exempt**
CONTRACT:	**Two (2) years, subject to renewal**
POSITION(S):	**One (1)**

The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Water Laboratory Manager or his/her designee.

Duties:
- Performs laboratory testing and analysis of water and wastewater samples in accordance with Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality (BECQ) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards.
- Calibrates and maintains laboratory equipment; prepares solutions, standards and media for chemical and microbiological testing.
- Maintains live bacteria cultures; determines volumes and degree of dilution of samples.
- Performs and ensures all laboratory testing meets established quality controls and standards criteria.
- Prepares and cleans glassware for testing ensuring sterilization standards are maintained.
- Prepares and enters data in system and reports; identify and report atypical results.
- Maintain laboratory logs, records and files including records of quality control functions.
- Maintain data and reporting in accordance with BECQ and EPA requirements.
- Identify and troubleshoot issues; make recommendations to resolve issues; review procedures and recommend changes or updates as required.
- Orders and maintains inventory of supplies, parts, and equipment; provide specifications and recommendations for replenishment or replacement of supplies and equipment.
- Collects field samples including well, safe drinking water, and wastewater samples; determines and gathers appropriate sample containers.
- Ensures validity of samples collected including sample holding time and temperature ranges.
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

Minimum Requirements:
Education: Bachelor's Degree in physical science, chemistry, biology, or other related science with at least two (2) years of experience in an environmental, microbiology, or chemistry laboratory is preferred. An equivalent combination of education and experience sufficient to perform essential duties may be acceptable.
Knowledge of: Chemistry and microbiology; Laboratory sampling, testing, and analysis methods, equipment and procedures. Mathematical concepts; Recordkeeping principles; Customer service principles; Safe work practices; Using computers, including sending business email and use of Excel and Word.
Skills in: Interpreting and applying written laboratory procedures, applicable laws, codes, regulations and standards; Analyzing water and wastewater samples and testing for EPA compliance; Evaluating, calculating and determining test results; Preparing test environment utilizing appropriate solutions, standards, and media. Calibrating and maintaining laboratory equipment. Reviewing and monitoring processes for quality control standards. Identifying, troubleshooting and recommending resolutions to issues. Reviewing procedures and recommending necessary changes. Ordering and maintaining supplies and inventory. Review and evaluate supply and equipment specifications providing recommendations. Collecting field samples and validating samples for testing; Maintaining laboratory records and files; Cleaning and maintaining laboratory equipment and supplies; Providing attention to detail; Adhering to safe work procedures, to include safe handling of acids, bases and wastewater. Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently and effectively exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

- **Licensing:**
- Valid CNMI Driver's License with appropriate class.

Applicants may be tested. Subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: Submit a completed CUC Employment Application, resume, and applicable supporting documents to the CUC Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan. Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota may submit their documents to their respective CUC Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer
P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950-1220 U.S.A.
Tel. No. (670) 664-4282 Fax (670) 235-5131

USDA awards OVR $86K grant

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

In a virtual meeting last Friday, the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Hawaii and Western Pacific Guam awarded the CNMI Office of Vocational Rehabilitation a $86,000 grant that will be used to meet its mandate and for upcoming projects.

According to OVR director Maryann Borja-Arriola, this grant will go a long way toward making many of the office's plans a reality.

"[About] $50,000 will…be used to buy a vehicle. We only have one vehicle and we are currently running three programs. …It is difficult to do several things with just one vehicle. …Oftentimes, my team would bring their own personal vehicle to run office errands or to do their work," she said.

"[About] $36,000 will…be used to upgrade all computer systems of the OVR to ensure proper and timely delivery of services and implementation of employment plans. …I know that the computers that we have now are still the computers I saw in 2010… they are already obsolete and broken," she added.

Other office necessities such as cabinets and surveillance cameras will also be purchased.

OVR, which is under the CNMI Office of the Governor, is in charge of increasing employment opportunities and the promotion of independence among persons with disabilities.

"When USDA Guam came here, I toured them around and they saw everything that OVR needed and we really appreciate their hard work in making this grant reach us. … Rep. Edmund Villagomez and his paralegal team helped us with the letter of proposal…," Borja-Arriola said.

USDA state director Brenda Iokepa-Moses, who joined the virtual awarding ceremony, is happy about this partnership with the CNMI. "We are so happy that you were able to receive this grant even though we don't have a physical presence in the CNMI. I am glad our staff in the Western Pacific was able to reach out and help you through this process. It is a great parentship that we are pushing right now and we hope to help you with many more grants in the future," she said. "Please share your success with the community so they too can come forth and inquire about our programs."

From left, CNMI Office of Vocational Rehabilitation director Maryann Borja-Arriola, Case Service manager Caroline Agulto, Administrative Operations specialist Arlene Reyes, and Employment specialist Tiava To'omata (not in photo) at the virtual meeting and awarding of an $86,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

BEA CABRERA

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514

INVITATION FOR BID (IFB)
(This is ad is paid for NMHC with HUD funds)

NMHC IFB 2020-011

BID SUBMISSION DATE & TIME: October 15, 2020, 10:00 a.m.

NMHC Rota Field Office Rehabilitation

Project package will be available on September 14, 2020, at the NMHC website at www.nmhcgov.net by clicking on the "Procurement" menu tab.

The provisions of the NMHC Procurement regulations, NMIAC 100-60-725 AND 100-60-730 Prohibiting Gratuities, Kickbacks and Contingent Fees shall apply.

A Mandatory Pre-Bid conference will be held via video teleconferencing on September 22, 2020, at 10:00 a.m. through Zoom Video Communications. Bidders will be provided the video teleconferencing link on the NMHC website at www.nmhcgov.net by clicking on the "Procurement" menu tab. Bidders are encouraged to email the Procurement Officer of their intent to participate in the pre-bid meeting. Failure to attend the Mandatory pre-bid conference will be considered a non-responsive bidder.

For more information, contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager/Procurement Officer, at (670)234-6866/9447 or email at officemanager@nmhcgov.net during regular business hours, 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, except CNMI holidays.

/s/
Jesse S. Palacios
Corporate Director

/s/
Vinney Atalig-Hocog
Chairman,
NMHC Board of Directors

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514

INVITATION FOR BID (IFB)
(This is ad is paid for NMHC with HUD funds)

NMHC IFB 2020-012

BID SUBMISSION DATE & TIME: October 15, 2020, 11:00 a.m.

NMHC Central Office Expansion

Project package will be available on September 14, 2020, at the NMHC website at www.nmhcgov.net by clicking on the "Procurement" menu tab.

The provisions of the NMHC Procurement regulations, NMIAC 100-60-725 AND 100-60-730 Prohibiting Gratuities, Kickbacks and Contingent Fees shall apply.

A Mandatory Pre-Bid conference will be held via video teleconferencing on September 22, 2020, at 2:00 p.m. through Zoom Video Communications. Bidders will be provided the video teleconferencing link on the NMHC website at www.nmhcgov.net by clicking on the "Procurement" menu tab. Bidders are encouraged to email the Procurement Officer of their intent to participate in the pre-bid meeting. Failure to attend the Mandatory pre-bid conference will be considered a non-responsive bidder.

For more information, contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager/Procurement Officer, at (670)234-6866/9447 or email at officemanager@nmhcgov.net during regular business hours, 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, except CNMI holidays.

/s/
Jesse S. Palacios
Corporate Director

/s/
Vinney Atalig-Hocog
Chairman,
NMHC Board of Directors

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514

INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)
(This is ad is paid for NMHC with HUD funds)

NMHC IFB 2020-014

BID SUBMISSION DATE & TIME: October 29, 2020, 10:00 a.m.

Information Technology Services

Project package will be available on September 28, 2020, at the NMHC website at www.nmhcgov.net by clicking on the "Procurement Tab".

The provisions of the NMHC Procurement regulations, NMIAC 100-60-725 AND 100-60-730 Prohibiting Gratuities, Kickbacks and Contingent Fees shall apply.

A Mandatory Pre-Bid conference will be held via video teleconferencing on October 08, 2020, at 10:00 a.m. through Zoom Video Communications. Bidders will be provided the video teleconferencing link on the NMHC website at www.nmhcgov.net. We request from bidders to submit a notice via email at officemanager@nmhcgov.net of their intent to participate in the mandatory pre-bid conference at least one (1) day before the conference. Failure to attend the Mandatory pre-bid conference will be considered a non-responsive bidder.

For more information, contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager/Procurement Officer, at (670)234-6866/9447 or email at officemanager@nmhcgov.net during regular business hours, 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, except CNMI holidays.

/s/
Jesse S. Palacios
Corporate Director

/s/
Vinney Atalig-Hocog
Chairman,
NMHC Board of Directors

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)
(This is ad is paid for NMHC with HUD funds)

NMHC RFQ 2020-013

SUBMISSION DATE & TIME: October 28, 2020, 10:00 a.m.

ARCHITECTURAL & ENGINEERING FIRMS

RFQ packets will be available on September 28, 2020, at the NMHC website at www.nmhcgov.net by clicking on the "Procurement Tab".

The provisions of the NMHC Procurement regulations, NMIAC 100-60-725 AND 100-60-730 Prohibiting Gratuities, Kickbacks and Contingent Fees shall apply.

A Mandatory meeting will be held via video teleconferencing on October 13, 2020, at 10:00 a.m. through Zoom Video Communications. Bidders will be provided the video teleconferencing link on the NMHC website at www.nmhcgov.net. Firms are requested to submit a notice of their intent to participate in the mandatory meeting one (1) day before the meeting via email at officemanager@nmhcgov.net.

For more information, contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager/Procurement Officer, at (670)234-6866/9447 or email at officemanager@nmhcgov.net during regular business hours, 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, except CNMI holidays.

/s/
Jesse S. Palacios
Corporate Director

/s/
Vinney Atalig-Hocog
Chairman,
NMHC Board of Directors

Know our beach flags

The CNMI Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality advises that new beach advisory signs have been recently installed around the island of Saipan to provide useful knowledge in relation to the health of CNMI waters and surroundings.

The beach signs display the advisory written in commonly used languages such as English, Korean, Japanese, and Chinese for better engagement, along with the beach safety flags.

Here are the two types of beach safety flags you should know:

GREEN: A green flag is posted when water quality sample results from a recreational beach site do not exceed advisory levels and the site is safe to swim or fish.

RED: A red flag is posted when water quality sample from a recreational beach site exceeds the advisory levels. It may be unsafe to swim or fish in this area within 300 feet of the posted signs, so we advise the public not to swim or fish in the area for 48 hours at your own risk after posting the red flag. (*Note that when bacteria levels go above the standards, it can be unsafe to come into contact with those waters, so you can become sick. If you touch the water, especially if the water gets in your nose, mouth, ears, or cuts, it can cause rashes, skin infections, gastrointestinal illness and respiratory illness*).

BECQ regularly samples beaches and coastal areas in the CNMI for bacteria concentration. The CNMI water quality standards are based on U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recommended criteria for bacteria.

The designated beach advisory signs are currently located at frequented beach access sites for fishing, swimming and recreational uses where BECQ samples weekly. Here are the following site installations from nrth to south you will see: Grotto, Tanapag Meeting Hall, DPW Channel Bridge (Lower Base), Micro Beach, Grandvrio Hotel, Garapan Fishing Base, Garapan Beach (13 Fishermen's Memorial), Civic Center Beach, Sugar Dock, CK District No. 2 Drain-(Aquarius Beach), and Kanoa Resort.

This installation project is intended to advise public safety and bring community health awareness regarding water conditions at recreational beach sites. Specifically, BECQ wants to encourage people to understand the importance of the beach advisories and how it affects both human and marine life.

Beach flag advisories are posted on the signs, on social media (Facebook and Instagram), aired in the news, and on the DEQ website. Also, if you would like to be added to the Water Quality email list for advisories, feel free to email waterqualityreport@becq.gov.mp or contact BECQ's Water Quality Surveillance/Nonpoint Source branch at 664-8531 for more information. ***(PR)***

Bail modified for man who shot self

The Superior Court has allowed to reduce the bail of a man who was arrested for unlawful discharge of a firearm after he shot himself in the leg.

Superior Court Associate Judge Teresa Kim-Tenorio granted last Tuesday Don Pangelinan Sanchez Jr.'s request to modify the previous bail imposed on him. Kim-Tenorio allowed Sanchez to post 10% of the $30,000 cash bail initially imposed on him but all the other bail conditions would remain in effect.

The court ordered Sanchez to return to court for his arraignment today, Sept. 28, at 9am.

Sanchez, 37, was represented by the Public Defender's Office while assistant attorney general Heather Barcinas appeared for the government.

Pangelinan is charged with unlawful discharge of a firearm, storage of firearm, persons permitted to process ammunition, and firearm owner's identification card requirement.

According to court documents, after accidentally shooting himself in the leg with a handgun, Sanchez told police that he was a victim of a drive-by shooting. However, upon further investigation, police learned from witnesses at the scene that the incident was self-inflicted as a result of an accidental discharge of a pistol. The pistol was later recovered and procured as evidence.

A witness told police that he saw Sanchez inside a Federal Emergency Management Agency-issued tent and that's where the defendant took a black handgun from his backpack and cocked it. Later, the witness said he heard a loud bang and saw Sanchez put the handgun on the table. The witness said Sanchez tried to stand up, but fell down on the ground.

Sanchez was previously convicted of sale or possession of illegal firearm and was released from the Department of Corrections on June 25, 2018. ***(Kimberly A. Bautista)***

Agulto's jury trial to begin this week

The jury trial of Roman "Roach" Agulto, who is charged with two counts of illegal possession of a controlled substance, is set to start this week.

Agulto's trial was supposed to begin last Monday but the Superior Court pushed it to October, which starts later this week.

According to court documents, two police officers were on routine patrol in Susupe on Nov. 24, 2018, when they came across Agulto's vehicle and drove behind it. Agulto, upon seeing the police vehicle, turned left on Pachinko Ave. from Tupak Street. When the officers turned onto Pachinko Ave. they found Agulto's vehicle stopped in the middle of the southbound lane. Police momentarily halted behind Agulto's vehicle when he reversed approximately 20 feet on the highway toward the officers' vehicle, nearly hitting it. Agulto then drove a few feet forward, making a west-facing right turn into a residence on Pachinko Ave. with police right behind him. Police said Agulto rolled down his window and raised both his hands. He then gunned his engine and took off, prompting the police officers to activate their police emergency light and went after him. Later the officers found Agulto's vehicle parked along Bakke St. and Agulto hiding in the bushes. After calling Agulto out and placing him in handcuffs, police searched the immediate area and found one headlamp and a case that contained small clear Ziploc bags that held a crystalline substance, and one glass tube pipe with crystalline substance residue in it. When asked about it, Agulto said it was not his.

Police also found other drug paraphernalia in Agulto's vehicle, including 110 clear Ziploc bags containing a crystal-like substance, and a branch of what was believed to have been marijuana. ***(Kimberly A. Bautista)***

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-20-027

ISLEY WATER TANK FENCE REPLACEMENT PROJECT

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from contractors for the replacement of the existing Isley Water Tank security fence in Isley Field, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $100.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled on **October 5, 2020 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-20-027 *Isley Water Tank Fence Replacement Project"***, to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on October 27, 2020**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement the form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

A *Bid Guarantee* of fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The bid guarantee may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States, Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A *Payment Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent and a *Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.

All bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions or request for clarification regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on October 9, 2020** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, at email manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Ms. Yvonne Ogumoro, CUC Water/Wastewater Engineer at email yvonne.ogumoro@cucgov.org and Ms. Christie Sablan, Procurement & Supply, Purchasing Technician, Senior at email christie.sablan@cucgov.org

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY BOYER SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-20-029

TINIAN MAUI WELL II REHABILITATION PROJECT
(W17-054)

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Tinian Maui Well II Rehabilitation Project in Tinian, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The project consists, in general installation of a new pump control panel, variable frequency drive (VFD), flow meter, installation of gate valve assembly, pressure gauges, air relief valve, check valves, interior/exterior painting of the facility and other related work. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the water system.

This project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of the approval for project award from USEPA.

CUC requires the Project to be completed in **240 calendar days** from date of award of contract.

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by a Site Visit is scheduled on **September 24, 2020 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-20-029, *Tinian Maui Well II Rehabilitation Project"***, to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on October 22, 2020**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement the form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

A *Bid Guarantee* of fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The bid guarantee may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States, Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A *Payment Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent and a *Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). **Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.**

All bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions or request for clarification regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on September 30, 2020** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email – manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Mr. Joel Puyat, CUC Water/Wastewater Engineer – via email joel.puyat@cucgov.org and Ms. Marcela Tenorio, Procurement & Supply, Purchasing Technician – via email marcela.tenorio@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY BOYER SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-20-030

INSTALLATION OF GRANULAR ACTIVATED CARBON (GAC) FILTER FOR TEN (10) WELLS
(W19-072)

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Installation of Granular Activated Carbon (GAC) Filter for Ten (10) Wells in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The project consists, in general installation of a new GAC filter, strainer, flow meter, installation of gate valve assembly, pressure gauges, air relief valve, pressure release valves, concrete pad and other related work. The work shall be done in accordance with the Project Plans and Specifications and without disruption to the daily operation of the water system.

This project is funded by a grant from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of the approval for project award from USEPA.

CUC requires the Project to be completed in **180 calendar days** from date of award of contract.

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $200.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by a Site Visit is scheduled on **September 17, 2020 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-20-030, *Installation of Granular Activated Carbon (GAC) Filter for Ten (10) Wells"***, to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on October 06, 2020**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement the form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

A *Bid Guarantee* of fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The bid guarantee may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States, Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A *Payment Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent and a *Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). **Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.**

All bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions or request for clarification regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on September 21, 2020** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Mr. Joel Puyat, CUC Water/Wastewater Engineer via email joel.puyat@cucgov.org and Ms. Christie Sablan, Procurement & Supply, Purchasing Technician, Senior via email christie.sablan@cucgov.org

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XXX, Issue No. 192

Published daily at 2/F JP Center,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com

Mark Rabago ASSOCIATE EDITOR
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com

MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Another step toward Middle East peace

The status between Israel and Bahrain is no longer ambiguous. Less than a month after the United Arab Emirates forged a peace agreement with the Jewish state, the Kingdom of Bahrain followed suit. Representatives from all three countries were on hand at a White House ceremony on Sept. 15 to celebrate the new Abraham Accords Declaration.

In a region that will soon produce young Emiratis and Bahrainis who are fluent in Hebrew, Israeli graduates from UAE and Bahraini universities, and regular commercial flights among all three countries—with airspace now open over Saudi Arabia—there is no longer a unified Arab world against Israel. Further, this is the first time that an Arab state or organization has used the term "Jewish people" in a peace deal.

Is peace then with the Saudi kingdom—the most important player in the region—a fait accompli? Following the UAE agreement, the Saudis reiterated their position that normalization with Israel is conditional on a peace deal with the Palestinians, whose future was not addressed in the Abraham Accords.

This did not go unnoticed in the Gaza Strip where, on the day of the signing, militants fired rockets into southern Israel, or in the West Bank, where they burned photos of President Donald Trump, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and UAE leader Mohammed bin Zayed. The Palestinians also recalled their ambassador from Bahrain.

How to reconcile the Palestinian goal of an independent state in Gaza and all of the West Bank with Israel's goal of a less-than-independent Palestinian state in Gaza and most of the West Bank? How to reconcile Israel's desire to maintain a unified Jerusalem as its capital with the Palestinian desire of an East Jerusalem capital? These questions were not broached on the White House lawn, but they remain at the core of the region's longest-lasting dispute.

Trump said the Palestinians would join the agreements "at the right time." His administration's approach thus far has simply been to circumvent them. As Arab states are normalizing ties with Israel, in exchange for large arms deals with the U.S., the Trump administration hopes enough pressure will be put on the Palestinians to make a deal with Israel.

Trump may not have the opportunity to see if this strategy works, but negotiating Arab-Israeli peace has been the president's most-lasting foreign policy achievement to date. By bringing together U.S. allies to establish embassies, exchange ambassadors and develop diplomatic relations, the president demonstrated that the path to peace in the Middle East will rely on consistent American facilitation.

(c) 2020 *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*

WHEN I SAID THAT A SUPREME COURT VACANCY SHOULD NOT BE FILLED IN AN ELECTION YEAR...
YOU BELIEVED ME.
HA HA HA HA HA HA
LINDSEY GRAHAM
LASVEGASSUN.COM
MIKE SMITH
DIST. BY KING FEATURES SYNDICATE/UMS

US military is quietly spreading the pandemic in the Pacific

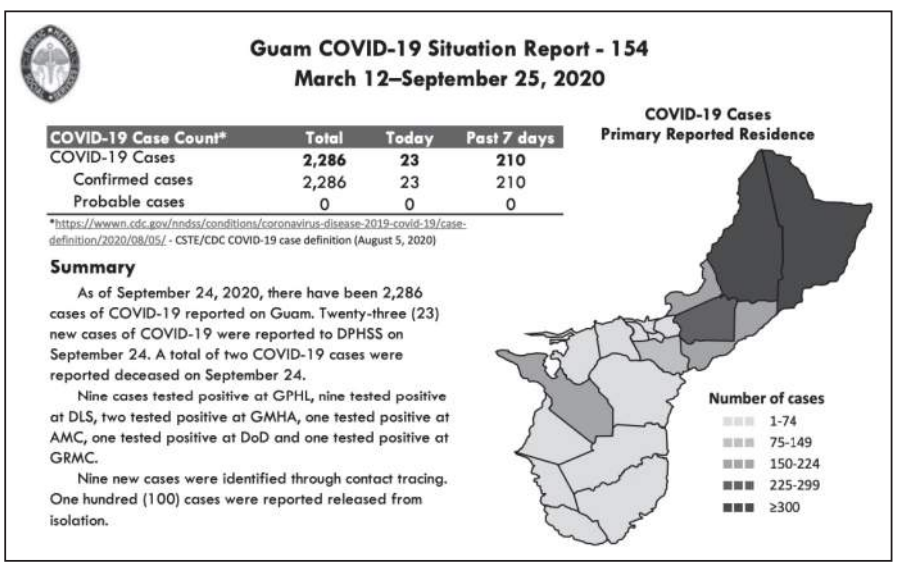
Editor's Note: An earlier version of this article was printed in Common Dreams on Sept. 12, 2020, licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 License. This article has been updated and revised by the author for republication.

By TIARA R. NA'PUTI
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Tiara R. Na'puti is a Chamoru (familian Robat & Kaderon) scholar. She is an assistant professor in the Department of Communication and an executive board member for the Center for Native American and Indigenous Studies at the University of Colorado Boulder.

Guam has always been the U.S. military's best kept secret. Military secrecy isn't really new, but in the midst of the global pandemic the Pentagon ordered bases to stop publicly announcing their COVID-19 cases. To date, 44,529 military personnel have contracted the coronavirus, and this summer military and public health officials declared the U.S. military a source of transmission both domestically and abroad. COVID-19 continues surging in the military, but that has not stopped its operations, which continue spreading the virus throughout America's empire of bases—especially in the Pacific.

Guåhan—the indigenous name for Guam—is the hardest hit place in the Pacific region by the COVID-19 outbreak, and military transmission is clear. On April 1, the Navy announced it would offload 4,000 sailors from the coronavirus infected aircraft carrier USS *Theodore Roosevelt* to be housed in Guam hotels, drawing protests from local politicians and community members. Approximately 1,200 crewmembers were infected, resulting in the death of one sailor and many others contracting the virus for a second time or breaking the island's quarantine restrictions during the months the Roosevelt occupied Guåhan.


Guam COVID-19 Situation Report - 154
March 12–September 25, 2020
COVID-19 Case Count* | Total | Today | Past 7 days
COVID-19 Cases | 2,286 | 23 | 210
Confirmed cases | 2,286 | 23 | 210
Probable cases | 0 | 0 | 0
*https://wwwn.cdc.gov/nndss/conditions/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/case-definition/2020/08/05/ - CSTE/CDC COVID-19 case definition (August 5, 2020)
Summary
As of September 24, 2020, there have been 2,286 cases of COVID-19 reported on Guam. Twenty-three (23) new cases of COVID-19 were reported to DPHSS on September 24. A total of two COVID-19 cases were reported deceased on September 24.
Nine cases tested positive at GPHL, nine tested positive at DLS, two tested positive at GMHA, one tested positive at AMC, one tested positive at DoD and one tested positive at GRMC.
Nine new cases were identified through contact tracing. One hundred (100) cases were reported released from isolation.
COVID-19 Cases
Primary Reported Residence
Number of cases
1-74
75-149
150-224
225-299
≥300

Despite the outbreak, by early June, Navy leaders designated Naval Base Guam as one of its "safe haven" ports for deployed military ships to stop and enjoy free time on the island during the pandemic. This decision subjected Guåhan to an onslaught of visits in the months of June and July. Seven different ships—including the USS *Nimitz*, which had previously experienced a COVID-19 outbreak—docked to allow crewmembers to relax, supposedly without risking exposure to the island's population.

But the island's COVID-19 cases continued to surge throughout the summer. By late June a surge in coronavirus cases among 35 airmen who tested positive in less than two weeks at Andersen Airforce Base prompted an investigation and the release of a list of 30 establishments visited by the infected airmen. On Aug. 20, the island's COVID-19 cases prompted Guam Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero to issue a second more restrictive lockdown. Days later, another aircraft carrier, USS *Ronald Reagan*, arrived for its "safe haven" port visit. The day after leaving Guåhan, a COVID-19 outbreak

See US on Next Page

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Nearly 12 to 1: Statement on FY 2021 budget status

By IVAN BLANCO
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Rep. Ivan Blanco is chairman of the House Ways & Means Committee.

When we looked at what the House budget provided and compared it to the proposed Senate version being considered by their Fiscal Affairs Committee, we expected to see some changes in their senate draft, their SD1. We understand that Rota and Tinian have municipalities to run and the House honestly did its best to adequately fund them. But the numbers we saw in their proposed SD1 were unreasonable.

In the proposed Senate version, there was a significant increase of 3.1 million for Tinian and Rota, 1.8 million and 1.3 million, respectively. Saipan was increased too—but instead of a similar significant increase, the Third Senatorial District received an increase of $247,000. So, when you compare what the House passed to what the Senate is considering, that's a ratio of 12 to 1 in terms of what the First and Second Districts were allotted compared to the Third Senatorial District. Based on this information, we do not feel confident that we can approve the Senate version of the budget if this issue remains unresolved.

Until we see what was actually passed last Saturday, I can't comment on the specifics of the Senate version but I can tell you about the House version that we passed back on Aug. 5.

Our House version took the 82 million that the governor identified as the net total available for appropriation and we stayed within that figure. That's a balanced budget.

We made some tough decisions and we wish we could have given more in certain areas, but in the end, our balanced budget accounted for the government's operations and its debts. We did this while respecting about 13 million in earmarks that the governor set aside for Group Health Life Insurance, Solid Waste, Marianas Visitors Authority, and Marianas Public Land Trust. These earmarks were not included in the governor's proposed figure of $82,656,213 for our net expenditure budget for fiscal year 2021.

By identifying $82 million, the governor set our cap for all intents and purposes. By removing these earmarks in their Senate version of the annual budget, the Senate reduced the 13 million by 25%, which means we have 3.25 million less to pay for these legitimate obligations. By appropriating the entire 144 million gross amount that was provided by the governor that includes the earmarks, the Senate appears to be exceeding the working cap and underfunding the original earmarks.

We feel bad that the possibility of a government shutdown exists, if we do not see eye to eye on the Senate version but we cannot pass an unbalanced budget or use funds we really do not have.

But please trust that we will work hard and burn the midnight oil if need be, to have a budget that satisfies both houses on the governor's desk for his consideration as soon as possible. We may not agree with the current budget proposal but we will work together to avert a shutdown.

'Democrats in Congress are right to hold out for more money'

By GREGORIO KILILI C. SABLAN
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan is the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands' delegate to the U.S. Congress.

Gov. Torres is doing so well managing the Commonwealth government he has decided to start advising the U.S. Senate.

He recently issued a press release, saying Senate Democrats should accept the pandemic relief package that Senate Republicans and the White House have offered.

Respectfully, the governor is wrong.

What Trump has offered is an employee payroll tax holiday for four months that employees must start repaying in April 2021. A cut of half of FPUC benefits for the unemployed.

What McConnell in the Senate has offered is a slim coronavirus bill that 20 of his own Republican colleagues refuse to support.

In the U.S. House, I am proud to say, we passed the HEROES Act in May with some $2.14 billion for the Commonwealth government and over $700 million for more stimulus, more FPUC and PUA, more for schools, more for infrastructure, and more for health care. We even provided separate money for the municipalities of the First Senatorial District of Rota, the Second Senatorial District of Tinian And Aguiguan, and the Third Senatorial District of Saipan and the Northern Islands.

About $2.9 billion for the Marianas altogether.

What Senate Republicans have offered has zero money for the Commonwealth and other state governments, facing bankruptcy because of the coronavirus.

I think Democrats in Congress are right to hold out for more money.

And our negotiating strategy is working. With voting already begun in the presidential election, Trump recently blinked and tweeted his agreement that the next relief package does need more money.

So, unless the governor has some secret plan to revive the Marianas economy (more Chinese gambling money?), he'd better hope his advice to Congress is ignored, Democrats win this argument, and the Commonwealth gets the federal help needed to survive.

US

From Page 8

was identified among the *Reagan*'s crew—the second outbreak that aircraft carrier has experienced this year. The Navy confirms only that an unspecified "small number" of positive cases were identified. To date, COVID-19 has infected nearly 2% of the island's population of 165,000, putting the military on island in health condition "Charlie."

Though Guam's military still is following Pentagon restrictions on reporting—the USS *Theodore Roosevelt* situation has meant that the local Guam government is separating out military cases in their COVID-19 data for the island. From the Naval ships that visit for "safe haven" to the airmen that flout public health protection measures, infections in Guåhan are tied to the military presence.

The U.S. military will continue to put the people of Guåhan at risk long after the pandemic ends, without a fundamental dismantling of the colonial project. After all, the military has always been a hotspot for colonial violence, destroying environments and occupying Pacific Island territories with impunity for generations. Despite the irreversible damage and desecration it inflicts, the general public is largely ignorant of its operations.

Politically, Guåhan is an "unincorporated territory," a designation unilaterally imposed after the U.S. engaged in bombing campaigns and land grabs to recapture the island from Japan in World War II—in short, a 21st century colony. This place may just be the best kept secret that the U.S. has—a nearly forgotten island in Micronesia where the military conducts training and testing that it would never have attempted in the contiguous states.

In 2020, the military continues to occupy nearly one-third of this westernmost U.S. territory in the Pacific. Andersen Air Force Base and Naval Base Guam are two major military bases that host bombers, serve as a home port to nuclear-powered fast attack submarines, maintain huge munitions and fuel storage facilities, maintain a helicopter squadron, operate a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) ballistic missile interceptor, and provide U.S. security forces to support the Department of Defense's military strategy in the Asia-Pacific region. The U.S. is also implementing plans to further inundate the island's existing military troop presence by relocating an additional 5,000 U.S. Marines from Okinawa to Guam. These elements of militarism are largely normalized as ensuring security and protection, yet research reveals that it is the U.S. military presence that makes the island a target for attacks and threats ranging from missiles to climate change.

As the largest global force, the U.S. military is the single biggest consumer of fossil fuels, largest producer of greenhouse gases, and single entity most responsible for destabilizing the Earth's climate. The Department of Defense is the greatest polluter worldwide, with a continuous record of destroying environments and generating massive amounts of hazardous waste for its routine operations. Military expansion, as well as the operation of bases, exacerbates our shared climate emergency. Dispossession and environmental destruction from militarization demonstrates the overwhelming costs of U.S. empire—particularly among indigenous communities throughout the Pacific and Indian country. Among the legacy of violence is racism, which existed long before Senate panel efforts to remove confederate namesakes from military bases.

» US military bases are hotspots for more than just COVID-19 transmission, they also make island territories targets for climate disasters

While threats from militarism and climate vulnerability are woven into everyday life in a U.S. colony, this situation has also been met with centuries of continuous resistance. With a ceaseless movement for self-determination, Guåhan and its indigenous Chamoru people continue to challenge the narrative that the island and its surrounding waters are merely a strategic military base for the U.S. to destroy with its Pacific bombing ranges.

As Chamoru scholar Dr. Kenneth Gofigan Kuper explains, living "at the tip of the American military's spear" means living with militarization that is "responsible for environmental contamination, with toxic chemicals and heavy metals sludging through the island's arteries." And though the country is quickly approaching the U.S. presidential election in November, Guåhan has "no vote in the electoral college, no representation in the U.S. Senate, only non-voting representation in the House of Representatives, and are under the 'plenary'—or complete—power of Congress."

While civic engagement and voting rights are important, U.S. colonization and militarization are constant threats to political power for the people of Guåhan. Until the island exercises its inherent right to self-determination and the island chooses its own political future, decisions on everything from public health to climate action and the economy will be continuously deferred to external powers. The impacts of these injustices are clear in the midst of surging COVID-19 cases and deaths as the military continues its construction of a live-fire training range on sacred land in Guåhan and executes war games throughout the Pacific—like the biennial Valiant Shield in the Marianas and RIMPAC in Hawai'i.

Though Guåhan floats on the other side of the world, every sector of civil society—from pension funds and university endowments to state and local municipalities—is implicated in the military war machine. Public and private assets are entangled with military contractors, weapons manufacturers, and war. Such profiteering is largely normalized today. From public to private assets, every part of the "American" experience has profited from colonial control in the Pacific. Yet divesting these dollars from destructive weapons and war could mean reinvesting in what the pandemic has revealed we all so desperately need—genuine security in public health, education, housing, food, green jobs and a just transition from fossil fuels. As the protests against anti-Black racism continue in cities like Kenosha, Portland, Oakland, Chicago and Philadelphia—rethinking and defunding the police also means divesting from the military industry that structures all our lives.

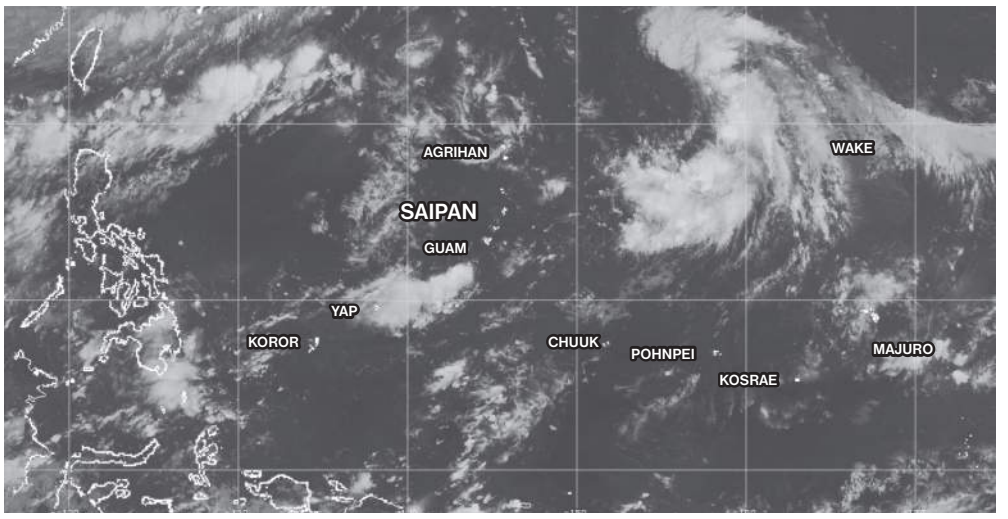
Centuries of continuous colonization are not Guåhan's defining story, and neither is the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated by the U.S. military's exceptionalism. The people of Guåhan deserve even more than a symbolic change to military base names—they deserve an end to colonial violence.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Mostly cloudy. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms. West winds 10 to 15 mph.	Mostly cloudy with a chance of showers and isolated thunderstorms.	Mostly cloudy with a chance of showers and isolated thunderstorms.	Mostly cloudy with a chance of showers and isolated thunderstorms.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms.
87° 77°	87° 77°	87° 77°	87° 77°	87° 77°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 10:58 AM, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2020

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Low to mid level moisture has increased since yesterday with the 00Z balloon sounding showing precipitable water of 2.03 inches and K index up to 30. Not a shoe-in for thunder around Guam but saw enough support for it. Surf observations indicate a north-northwest swell is producing surf of 3 to 5 feet along north facing reefs. The rip current risk has been raised to moderate for today and tonight due to this north-northwest swell.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	84° / 77°
Palau	Thunderstorms	85° / 78°
Yap	Thunderstorms	86° / 78°
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	87° / 79°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	86° / 75°
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	86° / 75°
Majuro	Thunderstorms	86° / 81°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:06 AM	6:08 PM
Tuesday	6:06 AM	6:07 PM
Wednesday	6:06 AM	6:07 PM
Thursday	6:06 AM	6:06 PM
Friday	6:06 AM	6:05 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	2:55 AM	4:02 PM
Tuesday	-	3:47 AM	4:43 PM
Wednesday	-	4:36 AM	5:20 PM
Thursday	-	5:24 AM	5:56 PM
Friday	-	6:11 AM	6:31 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Mostly Sunny	66° / 54°
Beijing	Partly Cloudy	81° / 64°
Hong Kong	Showers	88° / 81°
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	87° / 75°
London	Showers	63° / 45°
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	73° / 64°
Manila	Thunderstorms	90° / 79°
Melbourne	Rain	61° / 43°
Miami	Partly Cloudy	87° / 80°
New York	Mostly Cloudy	82° / 68°
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	82° / 66°
Paris	Partly Cloudy	63° / 46°
Busan	Windy	77° / 70°
Rome	Partly Cloudy	77° / 64°
Salem	Mostly Sunny	84° / 64°
San Francisco	Sunny	66° / 57°
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	81° / 61°
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	77° / 64°
Washington, DC	Thunderstorms	79° / 65°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
4:39 AM	HIGH TIDE	1.59
11:37 AM	LOW TIDE	0.09
6:33 PM	HIGH TIDE	1.81
-	-	-

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
  - ❏ Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
  - ❏ Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
  - ❏ Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
  - ❏ Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

CUSTOMER SERVICE For inquiries, purchase of back issues and complaints, call (670) 235-8747, 235-2440, fax 235-3740.

SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Friday, *Saipan Tribune* offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of $180. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769.
E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	7:30am	8:10am	1, 4
UA117	7:50am	8:30am	6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	7:30am	9:10pm	1 via Guam

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

UA183	7:30am	9:10pm	1 via Guam
UA183	7:30am	10:50pm	5 via Guam

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	5:50am	6:31am	1, 4
UA174	6:15am	6:56am	6

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:45pm	4:25am+1	1 via Guam
UA184	11:45pm	5:33am+1	5 via Guam

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	11:45pm	6:56am+1	5 via Guam

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301.2	8:30AM	9:00AM	Tues/Fri
1303	3:30PM	4:00PM	Tues/Fri

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101.2	9:30AM	10:00AM	Tues/Fri
3103	4:30PM	5:00PM	Tues/Fri

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1205	11:00	11:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1212	18:00	18:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2105	11:30	11:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

Business

‘King’s meal’ at reopened SURA buffet

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

SURA Saipan’s $10 buffet is back and falls in line with guidelines set forth by the Governor’s COVID-19 Task Force.

Assistant manager Michelle Park said unlike before when customers help themselves to the food, SURA Saipan waitstaff now serves it to them.

“Before the customers got their food, now they choose and we give it to them. Following all procedures for buffet under the new normal, they still fall in line. They just can’t get their own food. The food is blocked with a fiberglass shield,” she said.

Like all restaurants on island, Park said SURA Saipan had to shutter its doors momentarily when the island recorded its first COVID-19 back in March.

“We had to close our restaurant in mid-March due to the pandemic. We reopened end of March only for take-out.”

SURA Saipan is located along Beach Road next to the Garapan fire station. CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

SURA Saipan’s buffet offers a variety of Korean and local dishes for the very low price of $10 per person.

SURA Saipan reopened its dine-in service when the task force finally lowered the CNMI’s Community Vulnerability Level to Code Blue.

“We started lunch buffets on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. We check [customers’] temperature. We also require our customers to have face masks on at all times except at their tables. While lining up, we strictly require 6 feet distance between our customers. We also keep a log on all our guests with contact number,” said Park.

For more information, call 483-6594

Asked what makes SURA Saipan different from other Korean restaurants on Saipan, Park said no other Korean restaurant offers a variety of Korean and local dishes for the very low price of $10 per person.

Just some of the items available in SURA Saipan’s buffet include grilled pork, bibimbab, radish salad (almost like kimchi), green salad, kimchi fried rice, tteok bokki (spicy rice cake), soup, curry or Jjajang, SURA fried chicken, japchae, deep-fried buns with condensed milk, stir-fried vegetables of the day, plus six different side dishes including kimchi.

If you’re not in the mood for a smorgasbord and you’re always on the go, SURA Saipan also has $7 take-out lunch boxes available every day.

SURA, by the way, is a traditional Korean word for the king’s meal, according to Park. “So every one of our customers will be enjoying their meals like a king,” she said.

SURA Saipan is located along Beach Road next to the Garapan fire station. It is open every day 11:30am-1:30pm for lunch and 5pm for dinner. For now, buffet lunch is only available Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. For more information, call 483-6594 or reach them through their Facebook page.

For now, SURA Saipan’s lunch buffets are only available on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays

Appeals court hears fight over Trump tax returns—again

NEW YORK (AP)—A federal appeals court tested the waters on a potential compromise, but didn’t immediately rule Friday after arguments in President Donald Trump’s long-running fight to prevent a top New York prosecutor from getting his tax returns—a battle that seems destined to return to the Supreme Court.

A Trump lawyer argued that a subpoena for the records is overly broad but balked when an appellate judge suggested the court might be able to alleviate that concern by limiting the scope of documents being sought.

Trump’s lawyer, William Consovoy, signaled they will be satisfied only if Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr. is barred from getting all of the requested records. Consovoy is seeking to have the case sent back to a lower court that last month rejected his attempt to quash the subpoena, arguing that judge erred in his ruling.

If the three-judge panel refuses to put a hold on the enforcement of the subpoena, Trump’s lawyers will be forced to ask the Supreme Court to prolong the legal fight. The high court, which ruled 7-2 against the president in July, is down to eight justices after the death last week of Ruth Bader Ginsburg. The matter may not be fully resolved before the November election.

Trump’s lawyers appealed to the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals after a district court judge last month rejected their renewed efforts to invalidate a subpoena that the Vance’s office issued to Trump’s accounting firm as part of a grand jury investigation into his financial and business dealings.

The appellate judges appeared to meet Consovoy with a fair amount of skepticism, reminding him of the wide latitude grand juries are given to investigate potential wrongdoing. Judge Robert Katzmann suggested Trump’s lawyer was asking the court “to change the way grand juries have done their work time immemorial just because we’re dealing with somebody who’s president of the United States.”

Trump’s lawyers maintain that the subpoena seeking eight years of the president’s corporate and personal tax returns amounts to a “fishing expedition” and that Trump should be afforded the same protections as ordinary citizens in the same situation. They argued that aside from acknowledging an inquiry into money paid to two women who alleged affairs with Trump, Vance’s office hasn’t specified why it needs such a vast collection of his financial records.

Trump’s $200 prescription cards won’t hit mailboxes just yet

WASHINGTON (AP)—If you’re on Medicare, don’t run to the mailbox looking for a $200 prescription drug card courtesy of President Donald Trump.

Government officials said Friday that key details of Trump’s election-year giveaway still have to be fleshed out, including the exact timing and how Medicare’s cost would be covered—a sum that could approach $7 billion.

It’s also unclear which Medicare enrollees will get the promised cards. Trump said 33 million beneficiaries would receive cards in the mail, but more than 60 million people are covered by the federal health insurance program for seniors.

Trade groups representing the two industries most affected by the plan—drug companies and insurers—said they have received no specifics from the Trump administration. Public policy experts called it an attention-grabbing move—weeks before the presidential election—that won’t change much in the end.

“Providing a coupon does absolutely nothing to address the underlying problem of high and rising drug prices,” said Tricia Neuman, a Medicare expert with the nonpartisan Kaiser Family Foundation. “The administration has had nearly four years to work with Congress or go through the regulatory process to adopt proposals that could have a real and sustained impact on drug prices.”

For example, a bipartisan Senate bil l would have capped out-of-pocket costs for Medicare recipients with high drug bills, while also limiting price increases by requiring rebates to the program. But it stalled this year even though Trump lined up behind it. The compromise faced opposition from the drug industry and from Republican senators who saw it as a path to government price controls. The emergence of more ambitious legislation from House Speaker Nancy Pelosi diminished Democrats’ appetite for a deal.

Meanwhile, the administration is still working on regulatory actions to try to peg what Medicare pays for medications to lower prices abroad. That›s what Trump often refers to as “favored nations,” an idea that could lead to big savings but is likely to face legal challenges from the pharmaceutical industry.

Medicare enrollees can get prescription drug coverage by purchasing a “Part D” drug plan or by joining a Medicare Advantage plan. Announcing the savings cards Thursday at a speech in Charlotte, N.C., Trump called it a “historic provision” to benefit seniors. “Nobody has seen this before,” he said with typical salesmanship. “These cards are incredible.”

Using Trump›s figure of 33 million people getting the $200 cards, the cost would work out to $6.6 billion, not including administrative expenses.

The White House says the prescription cards are definitely coming. They will be mailed in coming weeks, although officials are providing no date.

The cards would provide a savings off copays owed by seniors for their medications, according to the White House. Medicare would cover the cost under its authority to launch demonstration programs.

Then, in another step, Medicare›s own cost would be offset. That would be done with expected savings from a yet-to-be finalized regulation that pegs what the program pays for drugs to lower overseas prices and capitalizes on Trump›s “favored nations” idea.

Nation

Trump caps judiciary remake with choice of Barrett for court

WASHINGTON (AP)— President Donald Trump has nominated Judge Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court, capping a dramatic reshaping of the federal judiciary that will resonate for a generation and that he hopes will provide a needed boost to his reelection effort.

Barrett, a former clerk to the late Justice Antonin Scalia, said Saturday that she was "truly humbled" by the nomination and quickly aligned herself with Scalia's conservative approach to the law, saying his "judicial philosophy is mine, too."

Barrett, 48, was joined in the Rose Garden by her husband and seven children. If confirmed by the Senate, she would fill the seat vacated by liberal icon Ruth Bader Ginsburg. It would be the sharpest ideological swing since Clarence Thomas replaced Justice Thurgood Marshall nearly three decades ago.

She would be the sixth justice on the nine-member court to be appointed by a Republican president, and the third of Trump's first term in office.

Trump hailed Barrett as "a woman of remarkable intellect and character," saying he had studied her record closely before making the pick.

Republican senators are lining up for a swift confirmation of Barrett ahead of the Nov. 3 election, as they aim to lock in conservative gains in the federal judiciary before a potential transition of power. Trump, meanwhile, is hoping the nomination will galvanize his supporters as he looks to fend off Democrat Joe Biden.

For Trump, whose 2016 victory hinged in large part on reluctant support from white evangelicals on the promise of filling Scalia's seat with a conservative, the latest nomination in some ways brings his first term full circle. Even before Ginsburg's death, Trump was running on having confirmed in excess of 200 federal judges, fulfilling a generational aim of conservative legal activists.

Trump joked that the confirmation process ahead "should be easy" and "extremely noncontroversial," though it is likely to be anything but. No court nominee has been considered so close to a presidential election before, with early voting already underway. He encouraged legislators to take up her nomination swiftly and asked Democrats to "refrain from personal and partisan attacks."

In 2016, Republicans blocked Obama's nomination of Merrick Garland to the Supreme Court to fill the election-year vacancy, saying voters should have a say in the lifetime appointment. Senate Republicans say they will move ahead this time, arguing the circumstances are different now that the White House and Senate are controlled by the same party.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said the Senate will vote "in the weeks ahead" on Barrett's confirmation. Barrett is expected to make her first appearance Tuesday on Capitol Hill, where she will meet with McConnell; Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham, the chair of the Judiciary Committee; and others. Hearings are set to begin Oct. 12, and Graham said he hoped to have Barrett's nomination out of the committee by Oct. 26.

AP

Judge Amy Coney Barrett applauds as President Donald Trump announces Barrett as his nominee to the Supreme Court, in the Rose Garden at the White House, Saturday, Sept. 26, 2020, in Washington.

Breonna Taylor protesters march anew: 'No justice, No peace'

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP)— A diverse crowd of hundreds marched in Louisville's streets chanting "Black Lives Matter" on Saturday night, the fourth night of protests after a grand jury declined to charge officers in the fatal shooting of Breonna Taylor.

People in the crowd also chanted "No Justice, No peace" as cars honked along a busy downtown artery in this Kentucky city that has seen more than 120 days of demonstrations over the death of the 26-year-old Black woman in a police raid gone wrong.

A few police cars followed behind, with officers telling protesters to stay on the sidewalk and out of the street before the march ended. Many briefly ended up back at a downtown square that has been a focal point of protests.

But as a 9 p.m. curfew time approached, a police loudspeaker announced that anyone who remained in the park would be arrested for a curfew violation. The square emptied out as people departed, many dispersing though one group headed to a nearby church where protesters had found refuge on previous nights.

A previous protest on Friday night was peaceful though police arrested 22 people for curfew violations. A police spokesman said some also were charged with failure to disperse.

Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer had urged continued peaceful protests in an appearance at a news conference Saturday evening.

"I'm mindful that many in our community are hurting and angry about the decisions announced this week," Fischer said. The mayor said he supports protesters' First Amendment rights to protest though "we just ask you to do that peacefully please."

Taylor was shot multiple times March 13 after her boyfriend fired at officers who had entered her home during a narcotics raid by white officers, authorities said. Taylor's boyfriend said he didn't know who was coming in and fired in self-defense, wounding one officer.

On Wednesday, Kentucky Attorney General Daniel Cameron announced a grand jury indicted one officer on wanton endangerment charges, saying he fired gunshots into a neighboring home during the raid that didn't strike anyone. That officer has been fired.

(AP PHOTO/DARRON CUMMINGS)

Victoria Gunther marches with Black Lives Matter protesters, Friday, Sept. 25, 2020, in Louisville. Breonna Taylor's family demanded Friday that Kentucky authorities release all body camera footage, police files and the transcripts of the grand jury hearings that led to no charges against police officers who killed the Black woman during a March drug raid at her apartment.

Trump campaign sues to block mail-in ballot rule changes

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP)— President Donald Trump's campaign committee and the Republican National Committee sued Saturday to block North Carolina election officials from enforcing rule changes that could boost the number of ballots counted in the presidential battleground state.

The Republicans' lawsuit claims a new system adopted by the State Board of Elections will allow for absentee ballots to be cast late and without proper witness verification, "which invites fraud, coercion, theft, and otherwise illegitimate voting."

The elections board on Tuesday issued new guidance allowing mail-in absentee ballots with deficient information to be fixed without forcing the voter to fill out a new blank ballot for November's general election.

The change means absentee voters who don't provide complete information on their envelope about a witness who saw them fill out the ballot won't have to complete a new ballot and locate another witness. A voter will just have to turn in an affidavit confirming they filled out the original ballot.

North Carolina is one of eight states with witness and or notary public requirements for absentee ballots, according to the Brennan Center for Justice. North Carolina General Assembly leaders announced late Saturday they had also filed a similar lawsuit in federal court against board members. They asked a judge to block enforcement of the board's absentee ballot alterations, which they contend would wrest away from the legislature its constitutional job to set the rules for federal elections.

The national Republicans' federal lawsuit claims the state elections board made a partisan "backroom deal" that undermines state lawmakers' "carefully-considered, balanced structure of election laws." The suit claims the board's guidance usurps a law that says a ballot may only be accepted if it has a witness signature on it.

"While touted as allowing greater access to voters during the current pandemic—an objective already addressed in recent months by the General Assembly—the actual effect is to undermine protections that help ensure the upcoming election will be not only safe and accessible but secure, fair, and credible," the suit says.

The lawsuit filed by the Trump campaign and the RNC also accuses the board of trying to override state law in saying that ballots postmarked on or before Election Day can be counted if they are received within nine days of the election instead of the three days prescribed by law.

The state elections board and its chairman, Damon Circosta, are among the defendants named in the lawsuit. The plaintiffs also include two Republican congressmen from North Carolina, U.S. Reps. Greg Murphy and Dan Bishop.

Asia

DESPITE CONCERNS

China pushes emergency use of COVID-19 vaccine

BEIJING (AP)—After the first shot, he had no reaction. But Kan Chai felt woozy following the second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine approved for emergency use in China.

"When I was driving on the road, I suddenly felt a bit dizzy, as if I was driving drunk," the popular writer and columnist recounted in a webinar earlier this month. "So I specially found a place to stop the car, rest a bit and then I felt better."

His is a rare account from the hundreds of thousands of people who have been given Chinese vaccines, before final regulatory approval for general use. It's an unusual move that raises ethical and safety questions, as companies and governments worldwide race to develop a vaccine that will stop the spread of the coronavirus.

Chinese companies earlier drew attention for giving the vaccine to their top executives and leading researchers before human trials to test their safety and efficacy had even begun. In recent months, they have injected a far larger number under an emergency use designation approved in June, and that number appears poised to rise.

A Chinese health official said Friday that China, which has largely eradicated the disease, needs to take steps to prevent it from coming back. But one outside expert questioned the need for emergency use when the virus is no longer spreading in the country where it was first detected.

It's unclear exactly who and how many people have been injected so far, but Chinese vaccine makers have offered some clues. State-owned Sinopharm subsidiary CNBG has given the vaccine to 350,000 people outside its clinical trials, which have about 40,000 people enrolled, a top CNBG executive said recently.

Another company, Sinovac Biotech Ltd., has injected 90% of its employees and family members, or about 3,000 people, most under the emergency-use provision, CEO Yin Weidong said. It has also provided tens of thousands of rounds of its CoronaVac to the Beijing city government.

Separately, the Chinese military has approved the use of a vaccine it developed with CanSino Biologics Inc., a biopharmaceutical company, in military personnel.

"The first people to have priority in emergency use are the vaccine researchers and the vaccine manufacturers because when the pandemic comes, if these people are infected then there's no way to produce the vaccine," Yin said.

Now, large Chinese firms including telecom giant Huawei and broadcaster Phoenix TV have announced they're working with Sinopharm to get the vaccine for their employees.

Several people who say they work in "front-line" organizations have said on social media that their workplaces have offered vaccinations for about 1,000 yuan ($150). They declined to comment, saying they would need permission from their organizations.

In an established but limited practice, experimental medications have been approved historically for use when they are still in the third and last phase of human trials. Chinese companies have four vaccines in phase 3—two from Sinopharm, and one each from Sinovac and CanSino.

The Chinese government referenced the World Health Organization's emergency-use principles to create its own through a strict process, National Health Commission official Zheng Zhongwei said at a news conference Friday.

He said there have been no serious side effects in the clinical trials.

"We've made it very clear that the COVID-19 vaccine we put into emergency use are safe," Zheng said. "Their safety can be ensured but their efficacy is yet to be determined."

N. Korea accuses S. Korea of intrusion to find official's body

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea accused South Korea of sending ships across the disputed sea boundary to find the body of a man recently killed by North Korean troops, warning Sunday the alleged intrusion could escalate tensions.

South Korea said earlier that North Korea sent a message including a rare apology by leader Kim Jong Un over the shooting death last week of a South Korean government official found on a floating object in North Korean waters. Officials in Seoul say the 47-year-old was likely attempting to defect to North Korea but little else is known about his motives.

"We urge the South side to immediately halt the intrusion across the military demarcation line in the West Sea that may lead to escalation of tensions," the official Korean Central News Agency said. "It arouses our due vigilance as it may lead to another awful incident."

It confirmed North Korea notified South Korea about its account of the incident on Friday. But it didn't say whether the notification included Kim's apology.

South Korea didn't immediately respond. But it earlier said that coast guard ships searched waters near the boundary on Friday and Saturday in case the man's body drifts back.

The poorly marked boundary is a source of animosities between the rival Koreas. They've fought at least three bloody naval skirmishes since 1999 and attacks blamed on North Korea killed 50 South Koreans there in 2010.

According to Friday's North Korean message publicized by Seoul, North Korean troops shot the man because he refused to answer questions and attempted to flee. It also said the troops burned his floating object in line with strict anti-coronavirus rules, after failing to find his body.

South Korea said Saturday it would request North Korea to launch an additional investigation.

Kim's apology was seen as an attempt to soothe anti-North sentiment in South Korea that could make it him difficult for him to win concessions in any negotiations. Kim is currently struggling to overcome worsening economic woes caused by U.S.-led sanctions over his nuclear program and the pandemic that forced his country to close its border with China, its biggest trading partner.

While Kim's apology could help reduce the risk of escalation of tensions between the rivals, conservatives in South Korea have launched a political offensive on liberal President Moon Jae-in for failing to prevent the man's death.

World

Iraq's foreign minister makes first visit to Iran

TEHRAN, Iran (AP)—Iraq's foreign minister arrived Saturday in Tehran for bilateral talks with senior Iranian officials, according to the state-run news agency.

IRNA reported that Fuad Hussein planned to meet his Iranian counterpart Mohammad Javad Zarif and President Hassan Rouhani, in what marked his first visit to the Iranian capital.

Zarif visited Baghdad in mid-July, when he met with Hussein and Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi. It was Zarif's first visit to Iraq since a U.S. airstrike in January killed a top Iranian general, Qassim Soleimani, outside Baghdad's international airport. The strike catapulted Iraq to the brink of a U.S.-Iran proxy war that could have destabilized the Middle East.

After Zarif's trip, the Iraqi premier visited Iran in July.

The report did not elaborate on the main reasons behind the top Iraqi diplomat's two-day trip to Tehran.

Iran sees neighboring Iraq as a possible route to bypass U.S. sanctions that President Donald Trump re-imposed in 2018 after pulling the U.S. out of the 2015 nuclear deal between Tehran and world powers.

(IRANIAN PRESIDENCY OFFICE VIA AP)

In this photo released by the official website of the office of the Iranian Presidency, President Hassan Rouhani, right, welcomes Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein for their meeting, in Tehran, Iran, Saturday, Sept. 26, 2020.

Last year, Iran's exports to Iraq amounted to nearly $9 billion, the official IRNA news agency reported on Tuesday. It said the two nations will discuss increasing the amount to $20 billion.

Before the current global pandemic, some 5 million Iranian pilgrims annually brought in nearly $5 billion visiting Iraq's Shiite holy sites.

Iran has seen the worst outbreak in the region, with more than 443,000 thousand confirmed cases and at least 25,300 deaths.

A news website affiliated with Iranian state TV, yjc.ir, reported that Iran cancelled all its flights to Iraqi cities until the religious holiday of Arbaeen, due to concerns over the coronavirus outbreak. The holiday marks the end of the forty days of mourning that follow annually on the death anniversary of the seventh-century Muslim leader Hussein, who was killed at the Battle of Karbala during the tumultuous first century of Islam's history.

Syria minister calls Turkey main terrorism sponsor in region

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—Syria's foreign minister accused Turkey on Saturday of being "one of the main sponsors of terror" in his country and the region, and said it is guilty of "a war crime and a crime against humanity" for cutting water to more than a dozen towns that resisted Turkish occupation.

In unusually harsh language, Walid al-Moallem said "the Turkish regime reigns supreme" when it comes "to sponsors and financiers of terrorism."

He said in a prerecorded speech to the first-ever high-level meeting of the U.N. General Assembly held virtually because of the COVID-19 pandemic that the cutoff of water supplies endangered civilian lives, especially during the coronavirus crisis.

The nine-year Syrian conflict, which initially began as a civil war, later became a regional proxy fight. Turkey, which now controls a zone in northern Syria, has backed opposition fighters against Syrian President Bashar Assad, Syrian Kurdish fighters and the Islamic State extremist group.

Al-Moallem also accused Turkey of moving "terrorists and mercenaries—referred to by some as `moderate opposition'--from Syria to Libya," violating Iraq's sovereignty, using refugees "as bargaining chips against Europe" and laying claim "by force to energy resources in the Mediterranean."

"The current Turkish regime has become a rogue and outlaw regime under international law," the Syrian minister said. "Its policies and actions, which threaten the security and stability of the whole region, must be stopped."

Turkey's U.N. Mission said it "rejects Syrian regime's delusional statement, ridden with ludicrous allegations, in its entirety."

"It 's shameful and unacceptable that the murderous Syrian regime which lost its legitimacy long ago continues to misuse (the) U.N. General Assembly general debate to distort the facts," said a mission spokesperson, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

"The Syrian regime is responsible for death, mutilation, abduction, starvation and enforced disappearance of millions of Syrians," the spokesperson said. "Its crimes against humanity, violations of international humanitarian law and the war crimes have been documented in countless U.N. reports."

Al-Moallem declared that the Syrian government "will spare no effort to end the occupation by all means possible under international law" of American and Turkish forces.

U.S. troops are deployed in the country to fight the Islamic State group.

"The actions of these forces, taken directly or through their terrorist agents, secessionist militias, or manufactured and illegitimate entities, are null and void, with no legal effect," he said.

Al-Moallem, who is also deputy prime minister, denounced U.S. sanctions, saying they are blocking the delivery of life-saving medicine and equipment during the pandemic.

Health & Wellness

This advertorial is sponsored by Tan Holdings HEALTH IS WEALTH Tan Siu Lin Foundation

DREAMSTIME/TNS

Do we still need to sanitize everything in sight? With months of research now behind us, experts say the answer is probably not.

You **don't need** to **wipe down everything** to **protect yourself** from the coronavirus

By GRACE DICKINSON
THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

If you were wiping down every single Amazon package, can of chickpeas, and takeout container at the start of the pandemic, you certainly weren't alone. Clorox, the world's biggest maker of disinfectant cleaning materials, says it's still recovering from high demand of its popular disinfectant wipes, not expected to return to shelves until 2021.

In the beginning, we were all encouraged to take every precaution that we could. But do we still need to sanitize everything in sight?

With months of research now behind us, experts say the answer is probably not. Yet, that doesn't mean surfaces present zero risk. Here's how to approach things now.

WASH YOUR HANDS, NOT YOUR PACKAGES.

By now, we know that the virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person. And experts agree that your time is better spent washing your hands after you return from the grocery store than wiping down every item brought home.

Why? "While it's theoretically possible that there's fomite-related transmission—transmission through contaminated surfaces—we're not seeing any cases reported that are directly linked to that," says Patricia Henwood, associate professor of emergency medicine at Thomas Jefferson University's Sidney Kimmel Medical College, and leader of the Emergency Medicine COVID-19 Task Force at Jefferson Health.

"Where people need to focus their energy on is hand-washing, masking and distancing," says Henwood.

When you're done putting your groceries away, wash your hands again. And then apply that same mindset as you move throughout your life. Pumping gas? Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer immediately after. It's more effective, and more important, than later wiping down your steering wheel. Experts say the likelihood of getting the coronavirus from a delivery box is low. But always remember to wash your hands before eating. If your hands are contaminated and you touch your face, you could get sick.

"There are only so many surfaces you can remember to sanitize anyway," says Thersa Sweet, associate teaching professor of epidemiology and biostatistics at Drexel University. "If you've touched something that has the virus on it, and you wash your hands, the virus is gone."

RISK OF SURFACE TRANSMISSION IS CONSIDERED LOW. BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN ZERO RISK.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says that while it's possible you can get the coronavirus by touching a surface that has the virus on it and then touching your face, "it's not thought to be the main way the virus spreads." But that doesn't mean the risk is zero.

"I don't want people to completely disregard the fact that the virus can be on surfaces," says Sweet. "Imagine someone coughs into their hand, they touch a doorknob, and you come by two minutes later and touch the same doorknob, and then wipe your nose. You could become infected."

Hand-washing, and paying attention to what you touch, are still both important.

"Though the risk of surfaces causing transmission is low, you still want to be aware," says Dr. Eric Sachinwalla, medical director of Infection Prevention and Control at Einstein Medical Center Philadelphia.

"And there are other illnesses where it could be more of a concern, especially with flu season coming up."

WHAT'S WORTH WIPING DOWN

Experts say it's a good idea to regularly wipe down your cell phone. And if someone else borrows it, then you definitely should.

"It's like when you wear a cloth mask to the grocery store, and you wash it before using it again because there could be virus particles on the outside—your phone could be the same way, particularly because it's up against your face," says Sweet.

You may also want to disinfect your doorknobs, especially if you share an entrance with others outside of your household. And if you're returning to an office or sharing equipment, elevate your cleaning efforts.

But again, the surface you need to be most concerned about is the one on your hands.

IF SOMEONE IN YOUR HOME GETS SICK, RETURN TO HIGH ALERT.

Step up your cleaning game if someone in your household was, or may have been, exposed to COVID-19. This includes if they aren't experiencing symptoms but are awaiting test results.

In the event someone tests positive or gets sick, try to minimize their contact with shared surfaces. Keep them in one room, if possible, and avoid sharing a bathroom if you have a spare.

"Be more aggressive with cleaning, especially in areas where the sick person is living," says Sachinwalla. "Once they start feeling a little better, wash their sheets and towels regularly—you don't have to throw them away, just wash them. And then make sure you're wiping any horizontal surfaces where droplets could have spread."

Just like in a hospital, everything should be regularly wiped down in any high-risk setting.

YOU CAN STOP WIPING DOWN YOUR CREDIT CARD. (BUT DOING IT WASN'T WRONG.)

Coronavirus advice is ever-evolving. While it may have felt a little ridiculous to sanitize your credit card after every public transaction, you don't have to feel silly for having done so. And health experts were never trying to trick you.

"This is a novel area of science, and of course at the beginning when we know less, we want to take as much precaution as possible," says Henwood. "We're trying to learn as much as we can, as fast as we can, and when we have more data, that's what leads us to change our guidance. That will continue to happen as we have more data and testing."

Cooling Stress Tips: Local leadership needed to reverse pandemic

By JUDI LIGHT HOPSON
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

By this point in time, most of us have had issues related to COVID-19. During the past several months, almost every individual has felt some anguish.

For example, people are still arguing their rights are being violated when they're required to wear a mask. Or, they worry about their kids being back in school.

We all feel we've been taken prisoner by some invisible force. Who doesn't want to go on vacation, have a party, or go to a sporting event? But, the enemy (the virus) is out there.

Community leadership is critical to winning this war. Health officials must expand education, help financially challenged people buy masks, and make sure those who are sick are in quarantine.

Here's the reality on cooling our stress: If we don't jump in to fix things, our stress will rise higher and higher.

Here are some questions and comments I've heard from friends:

- Do you really believe the cases are in the millions? Could journalists be exaggerating?
- Do you know anyone personally who's gotten sick? Why have I not heard of anyone?
- Can we actually believe someone who says they've tested positive? Could they be lying?

Personally, I know 16 people who have tested positive for COVID-19. Twelve got it at their church, three got it at work, and one doesn't know where he got it.

"I was curious why our local funeral home was allowing over 300 people inside with no masks," says a nurse we'll call Kristin who lives near the Tennessee-Virginia border. She drove by as attendees were coming out of the building.

Kristin got on the phone and did a little research, because she personally recognized many of these people exiting the funeral.

Kristin says, "Five of the people I called said they could not afford throw-away masks, and they added they did not trust the effectiveness of cloth masks. So, they'd decided to take their chances."

A pharmacist from New Orleans says he hears comments that the news media might be exaggerating the numbers of those who are sick. We'll call him Cory.

"Perfectly intelligent people in my community, who don't really follow the news religiously, are telling themselves that the news people just want to inflate their stories," says Cory. "They refuse to acknowledge what's going on."

A medical administrator in a state health department says she recently faced a new issue. We'll call her Maxine. Maxine told me, "A sixth-grade teacher three streets from my house, whom I'll call Ms. Jones, tested positive."

Maxine continues, "This woman was caught on camera at her condo complex walking about freely and coughing loudly. She would not wear a mask, even though elderly people lived all around her."

Maxine nearly fainted when she got a call from one of the condo owners. "I was told Ms. Jones had shown up for the first day of school. She told her neighbors she didn't have a temperature, so she planned to meet with the teachers for orientation."

Maxine goes on to say, "We can't assume everyone knows what to do, and we can't assume that every adult really cares if they protect others. I personally told Mrs. Jones to quarantine for 10 days, but unless people speak up, the spread is going to continue."

Federal and state leaders can only do so much. The rest of us need to pay attention, act as guardian angels of each other, and make sure (with no excuses) that we help to reverse the pandemic.

Judi Light Hopson is author of the stress management book, "Cooling Stress Tips." *She is also executive director of USA Wellness Cafe at www.usawellnesscafe.org*

Life & Style

Tiny Rubik's Cube goes on sale in Japan for anniversary

TOKYO (AP)—A tiny but playable Rubik's Cube, so little it fits on your fingertip, has gone on sale in Japan for 198,000 yen, or about $1,900, for delivery starting in December.

Billed as a "super-small" Rubik's Cube, it was created to mark the 40th anniversary of when the original 3-D puzzle went on sale in Japan.

The cube measures just 9.9 millimeters, or O.39 inch, by 9.9 millimeters, and weighs 2 grams (less than a tenth of an ounce).

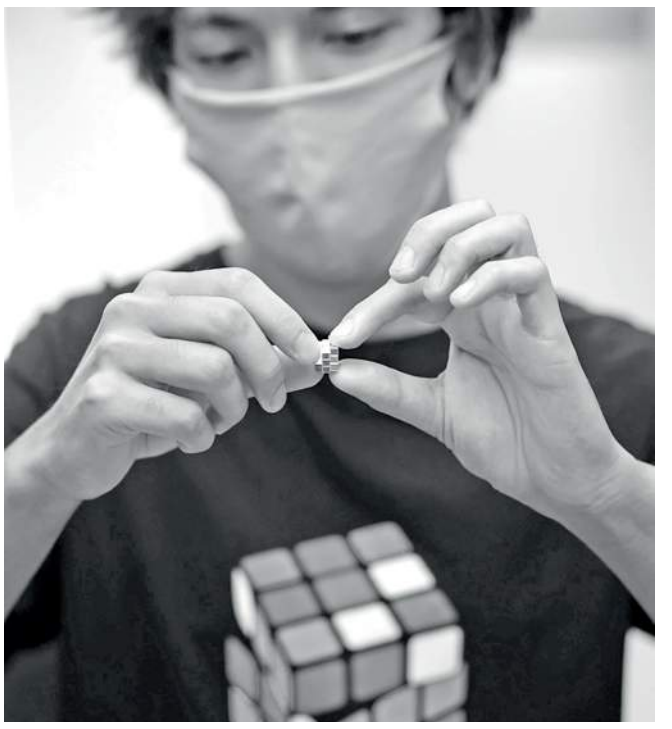
It's made of "ultra-precision metal," and comes with a box for its display, according to MegaHouse Corp., a subsidiary of Tokyo-based toymaker Bandai Co.

Orders began Wednesday, only by credit card.

Rubik's Cube was invented by Hungarian architecture professor Erno Rubik in the 1970s. A U.S. company turned it into a hit product in the 1980s.

More than 100 million Rubik's Cubes were sold worldwide in the first two years. It was an instant hit in Japan, where more than 4 million were sold in the first eight months after it went on sale in July 1980.

The new tiny cube was shown this week at an exhibit in Tokyo organized by the Hungarian Embassy, which also includes an artwork made with Rubik's Cubes. The exhibit runs through Nov. 9.



(MACIEJ KOMOROWSKI OF HUNGARY EMBASSY VIA AP)
In this photo provided by Maciej Komorowski of Hungary Embassy, the world's smallest Rubik's Cube is shown in Tokyo Wednesday, Sept. 23, 2020, to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the six-sided puzzle in Japan. A tiny but playable Rubik's Cube, so little it fits on your fingertip, has gone on sale in Japan for 198,000 yen, or about $1,900, for delivery starting in December.

Choir practice in Spain infects 30 of 41 members with virus

MADRID (AP)—At least 30 of 41 members of a gospel choir in northeastern Spain have contracted coronavirus following a rehearsal indoors with little air circulation, local authorities and the chorus say.

The River Troupe Gospel, a volunteer gospel group, rehearsed on Sept. 11 ahead of an open-air performance two days later for a local festival in Sallent, a town in the province of Barcelona. It was their first public show since the beginning of the pandemic.

After one member of the chorus tested positive following the Sept. 13 performance, more than 40 other members and their close contacts went into isolation, the chorus said. Since then, at least 30 singers have tested positive, the Sallent municipal government said.

Although the chorus claims that it complied with most health safety measures—temperature checks on arrival, hand washing, social distancing between each member and masks on for most of the rehearsal—the venue's windows were closed to avoid moths and mosquitoes. The group said it had switched on air conditioning to fight the heat.

Virus delays Rio's Carnival for first time in a century

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP)—Rio de Janeiro delayed its annual Carnival parade, saying Thursday night that the global spectacle cannot go ahead in February because of Brazil's continued vulnerability to the pandemic.

Rio's League of Samba Schools, LIESA, announced that the spread of the coronavirus has made it impossible to safely hold the traditional parades that are a cultural mainstay and, for many, a source of livelihood.

"Carnival is a party upon which many humble workers depend. The samba schools are community institutions, and the parades are just one detail of all that," Luiz Antonio Simas, a historian who specializes in Rio's Carnival, said in an interview. "An entire cultural and productive chain was disrupted by COVID."

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Trump says he's 'not a fan' of Meghan's, wishes Harry luck

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Donald Trump took a swipe at the Duchess of Sussex on Wednesday after the former Meghan Markle and Prince Harry participated in a Time 100 video urging Americans to vote. Meghan, an American, says in the video that every four years elections are referred to as the most important election of our lifetime. "But this one is," she stressed. "When we vote, our values are put into action and our voices are heard." Trump was asked about the video during a White House press conference, with the reporter saying the couple "essentially encouraged people to vote for Joe Biden." "I'm not a fan of hers and I would say this, and she probably has heard that, but I wish a lot of luck to Harry. He's going to need it," Trump said.

Billie Lourd introduces newborn son in surprise announcement

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Actress Billie Lourd has announced the birth of her son. Lourd announced on her social media Friday that she and her fiance, Austen Rydell, welcomed their newborn son into the world. She is the daughter of the late Carrie Fisher, who died in 2016 at the age of 60 following a heart attack. The announcement came as a surprise, since Lourd's pregnancy was not made public. The "American Horror Story" star shared a photo of their son's feet. The caption read "Introducing Kingston Fisher Lourd Rydell" with blue heart and crown emojis. In June, Rydell announced their engagement with a series of photos and a video of the couple. His caption read "She said YES!! (Actually she said "Duhhh") But I guess that's even better than yes?!?"

Pageant powerhouse Venezuela to hold virtual beauty contest

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)—For the first time in decades of Miss Venezuela competitions, the pageant powerhouse's so-called "most beautiful night" will not be live as organizers try to put on a compelling contest virtually amid a pandemic lockdown.

The storied beauty contest - Miss Venezuela has produced seven Miss Universe winners, six Miss Worlds and seven Miss Internationals - has endured corruption and sex scandals, as well as lawsuits, in recent years. But the novel coronavirus presents a challenge like no other, forcing the pageant to drop its musical productions and live audience yet still maintain the interest of its legion of loyal followers.

Each of the 22 competitors has been under strict confinement at home under quarantine requirements Venezuela imposed in mid-March, relying on distance learning through social media to master walking the runway, putting on makeup and performing, organizers say. The six-month training process to prepare the young women was done entirely online.

Organizers then recorded each participant individually, without protective facemasks, walking the runway and making other appearances on stage. The videos were edited to give viewers a sense that they all appeared together in a group.

The pre-recorded show will air Thursday night. The crowning of the new Miss Venezuela and the two finalists will take place the next day in another recorded program.

Man wrapped up in his world has little to give his family

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I have been married for 30 years. He has always been self-centered. We have discussed this over the years, and it hasn't changed his disposition. I bought him an "It's All About Me" coffee cup years ago as a joke, and he enjoys using it!

We both have office jobs and day-to-day issues and problems with our employees and co-workers. If we talk on the phone at lunch or over dinner, he describes his daily issues in excruciating detail, looking for my feedback/input and then moves on. There is never a time I can update him on my issues and get his input to help with mine because he's too busy thinking about his issues.

He cares deeply about our adult children, but doesn't give them input on their issues either. If I don't remind him about the challenges (i.e., buying a new car, looking for a new job, etc.) they want our advice on, he would never reach out to them to assist. I am not sure if this is a personality trait I must live with or if you have some ideas to improve this situation.

ALL ABOUT HIM

DEAR ALL ABOUT HIM: Has it occurred to you that in some areas your husband may be less self-centered than an empty vessel? He may not help you with your daily issues because he doesn't have the answers.

Assuming you have talked to him about this until you are blue in the face, the next time he asks for your input, you might consider being less helpful. Or, beat him to the punch and tell him about your problems before he has a chance to tell you the ones he is having.

As to your adult children, they should go directly to their father when they seek his advice and continue to approach him until they get it.

DEAR ABBY: I have a dear friend I've known for 25 years and I consider to be family. We recently had a falling-out because I set some boundaries I feel are necessary for my own wellness as I grow into my 40s. The boundaries revolve around disrespectful or belittling speech.

My friend is gay and excuses the disrespect as the way his community speaks among themselves. He often calls me the b-word in fun, as well as similar names. I have told him it hurts me, but he refuses to acknowledge it, dismissing it as "you know, since high school that's how we talk." He might show some restraint at times, but when he's drinking (which is often), he reverts back to making cruel or hurtful comments.

I am now a single mother, looking to grow and evolve into a better person, rebuild my self-esteem and possibly find a partner in life, but my friend keeps pulling me back into a dark place every time we speak. I care too much about him to walk away from this friendship. What can I do?

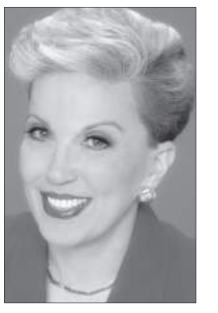
BOUNDARIES SET IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR BOUNDARIES: You have already taken the first step. You told your friend (frenemy?) you will no longer tolerate being called a b** or any other offensive name. For some in the gay community this may be considered "fun," but it ISN'T funny to you. That he would continue doing this after you expressed that it hurt your feelings makes me wonder if he values your relationship as much as you do.**

Maintain your boundaries by leaving his presence if he uses that language. Oh, and one more thing: When you know he's been drinking, avoid him because, if you don't, you know what will follow.

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

For everything you need to know about wedding planning, order "How to Have a Lovely Wedding." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Wedding Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

LOOK, HOBBES, I CUT A PIECE OF CARDBOARD TO MAKE A TV SCREEN.
SEE, I JUST HOLD IT UP AND IT'S LIKE I'M ON TV.
WOW, YOUR OWN SHOW!
TOO BAD I CAN'T REALLY FORCE MY WAY INTO MILLIONS OF PEOPLE'S HOMES EACH DAY.
BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, NO ONE IN THIS HOME CAN TURN ME OFF!

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

THIS GUY IS REALLY ANNOYING. HE'S ALWAYS FACT-CHECKING ME.
LOOK, HERE I SIMPLY STATE A WELL-KNOWN TRUTH.
"CATS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL THE WORLD WARS?!"
DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE A DENIER TOO!

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

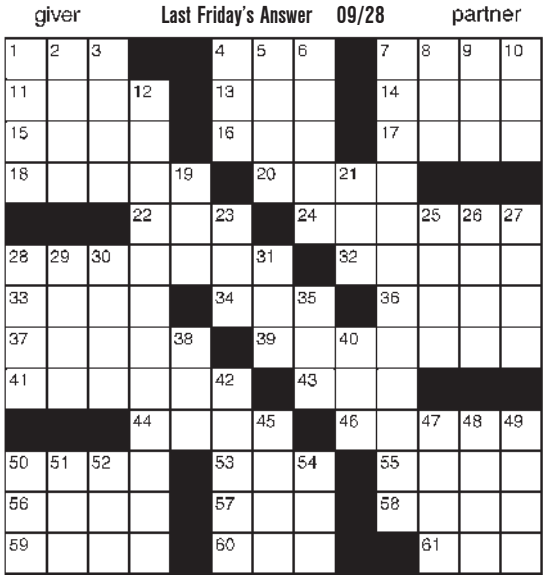
ACROSS
1 Little rascal
4 Computer key
7 Judy's daughter
11 Tidy
13 Speedometer stat
14 Mid-month date
15 Moolah
16 — chi
17 Vanished
18 Vocally
20 Screen material
22 Eggy quaff
24 Exercise-tracking device
28 Coffee mug parts
32 Carroll critter
33 Skin soother
34 Com serving
36 "Yeah, right!"
37 Hear again
39 Testimony giver
41 Headache aid
43 Plead
44 Big-screen format
46 Monastery VIP
50 Scoff
53 Bikini half
55 Arm bone
56 Second-hand
57 Legislation
58 Equipment
59 Hair goops
60 CBS logo
61 "CSI" evidence

DOWN
1 Bygone Peruvian
2 Repast
3 El —, Texas
4 911 responder
5 Unwanted email
6 Main
7 Firefly
8 Wedding words
9 Buddhist sect
10 Enzyme ending
12 USAF air show squadron
19 100 cts.
21 Serena, to Venus
23 "Gosh!"
25 Innocent one
26 Enrages
27 B'way booth sign
28 Mata —
29 Actor Guinness
30 Memorandum
31 Cutting tool
35 Tease
38 Candied veggie
40 Earl Grey, for one
42 Roof feature
45 MRI forerunner
47 Ran in the wash
48 — incline (tilted)
49 Skater Lipinski
50 Moonshine vessel
51 Jargon suffix
52 Snaky fish
54 Shock partner

Solution time: 26 mins.

T	H	E	T	A	■	P	B	S	■	A	P	B
B	A	G	E	L	■	R	E	A	■	M	L	I
A	N	G	S	T	■	E	C	C	H	E	A	D
■	■	T	H	O	M	A	S	■	A	N	N	F
O	H	O	■	S	E	C	■	T	V	S	E	T
H	A	S	P	■	W	H	E	R	E	■	■	■
M	I	S	U	S	F	■	J	U	N	F	A	U
■	■	■	C	A	D	R	E	■	T	G	I	F
B	A	C	K	S	■	E	C	O	■	C	L	O
F	I	I	F	■	S	A	T	U	R	N	■	■
E	G	G	R	O	L	L	■	T	H	O	S	E
N	E	A	■	Y	O	M	■	R	C	U	E	■
E	R	R	■	L	E	S	■	E	S	S	E	N

Last Friday's Answer 09/28



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Hilary Duff, 33; Ranbir Kapoor, 38; Mira Sorvino, 53; Janeane Garofalo, 56.

Happy Birthday: Concise action is essential. Pondering over what to do or how to react will leave room for outside interference. Stay focused on personal gain, strength and taking care of yourself. Anything less than striving for perfection will be under attack by those who don't want to see you excel. Make health, love and fitness priorities. Your numbers are 5, 11, 17, 22, 28, 36, 47.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Being the voice of reason will put you in a favored position when it comes to getting what you want. Follow through with actions, live up to your promises and share your feelings with someone you love. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): You've got more going for you than you realize. Forget being verbally aggressive; your actions will make a difference to the outcome of any situation you face. Protect your rights and the rights of those less able. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Seeing is believing. Don't trust anyone giving you a verbal account of a situation. Gather the facts, and avoid being put in a compromising position. Take the initiative and do things for yourself, and you'll avoid interference. Make fitness a priority. ✪✪

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Dream on, and you'll come up with a remarkable idea that will help you gather momentum. A change you want to make will become attainable if you join forces with someone heading in the same direction. ✪✪✪✪

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Refuse to let anyone interfere with the way you handle your money or work-related matters. Make decisions based on what will benefit you, and don't let anyone play mind games with you. Change only what's necessary. Stay active. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Don't wait to make changes that will improve your life. Pick up new skills and knowledge that will encourage more significant opportunities. Look for opportunities that present long-term benefits. Stay in the loop regarding job prospects. A change of scenery will lead to new beginnings. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Collaborate with someone who shares your concerns, and the outcome will help you decide what you want to pursue next. Don't let a problem with an elderly friend or relative prevent you from following your heart. Romance is featured. ✪✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Concentrate more on creative endeavors and less on emotional situations. Make the most of whatever situation you face at home or work. Being dependable and hardworking will keep you out of trouble. Give loved ones space to do as they please. ✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Personal growth, physical fitness and being passionate regarding your pursuits will pay off and help you avoid interference from someone who is threatened by the progress you make. Keep your plans a secret for the time being. ✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

COPYRIGHT 2007 UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Recall what's happened, and use the experience to help you get ahead. Don't procrastinate; let your thoughts lead to actions. How you handle others, money matters and your responsibilities will matter. Positive change will bring optimum results. ✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Handle situations and the people you interact with carefully. A positive attitude will help you persuade others to see things your way. A romantic gesture will encourage a better relationship with someone you love. Personal improvements will boost your confidence. ✪✪✪

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Work with others, and you will bring about change. A chance to invest in something you enjoy doing will spark your imagination and encourage you to turn a pastime into a lucrative pursuit. Don't let frustration set in. Keep moving forward. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are appealing, social and ambitious. You are persistent and flirtatious.

Visit Eugenialast.com, or join Eugenia on Twitter/Facebook/LinkedIn.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

6				4				2
	2		3		6		4	
	3	7				8	9	
	9			1			3	
2			7		5			8
	7			3			5	
	1	4				9	8	
	8		4		9		1	
5				8				3

Difficulty Level ★ 9/28

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's Answer

2	8	7	4	3	6	5	1	9
4	5	3	1	2	9	8	6	7
6	1	9	8	7	5	2	4	3
9	6	1	2	4	7	3	8	5
5	2	8	6	9	3	1	7	4
7	3	4	5	8	1	9	2	6
3	4	5	7	1	2	6	9	8
1	7	6	9	5	8	4	3	2
8	9	2	3	6	4	7	5	1

Difficulty Level ★★★★

©2012 Conceptis Puzzles, Dist. by King Features Syndicate, Inc.

WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

SWIVEL CHAIRS Solution: 9 letters

H	L	T	E	K	C	U	B	E	A	D	J	U	S	T
W	E	R	A	C	C	E	N	T	V	B	A	W	H	U
A	V	I	J	A	C	K	L	E	R	O	S	O	G	R
R	E	K	G	A	S	Y	L	W	S	N	M	O	L	N
D	R	S	P	H	N	Y	H	F	E	A	R	D	I	I
R	E	S	P	I	T	E	A	D	S	B	B	A	D	N
S	D	T	V	S	E	B	E	J	I	G	T	E	E	G
S	E	A	T	L	R	D	E	T	O	N	X	R	R	T
E	T	R	S	I	D	F	E	E	S	I	O	B	F	F
L	C	M	C	A	F	R	L	R	F	V	U	E	A	B
E	E	R	P	E	I	Ⓓ	A	R	O	L	L	S	A	A
S	N	E	R	G	N	B	Ⓔ	F	C	O	T	R	M	R
I	N	S	H	I	G	U	E	Ⓢ	T	V	B	F	L	R
O	O	T	P	I	L	L	O	W	Ⓚ	E	E	P	I	E
N	C	S	E	L	G	N	A	L	R	R	D	S	F	L

© 2020 Andrews McMeel Syndication www.wonderword.com 9/28

Accent, Adjust, Angles, Armrests, Barber, Barrel, Bars, Base, Bucket, Club, Connected, Dens, Desk, Drafted, Draw, Fabric, Fast, Film, Fitted, Fixed, Glider, Guest, Height, Jack, Jefferson, Keep, Left, Lever, Lift, Move, Noiseless, Orbiter, Padded, Pillow, Read, Respite, Revolving, Right, Rolls, Skirt, Space, Spindle, Style, Thomas, Turning, Vinyl, Wheels, Wood

Last Friday's Answer: Mischievous

To purchase **WONDERWORD** books, visit www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

LeBron, Lakers finish off Nuggets

FLORIDA (AP)—LeBron James wore out the path to the NBA Finals in the Eastern Conference, making annual trips out of Miami and Cleveland.

Now he's the best in the West.

And for the first time in a decade, so are the Los Angeles Lakers.

James punctuated his 27th postseason triple-double with a big fourth quarter, powering the Lakers to a 117-107 victory over the Denver Nuggets on Saturday night to win the Western Conference finals in five games.

James finished with 38 points, 16 rebounds and 10 assists to become the fourth player to reach 10 NBA Finals. It took him two seasons to make it with the Lakers, after falling short of the playoffs in an injury-plagued first season following eight consecutive trips with Miami and Cleveland.

"For me personally the job is not done," James said.

"For us as a franchise, I'm extremely proud to be a part of this franchise getting back to where it belongs and that's playing for championships and competing for championships, representing the Western Conference this year in the championships. So, this is what I came here for."

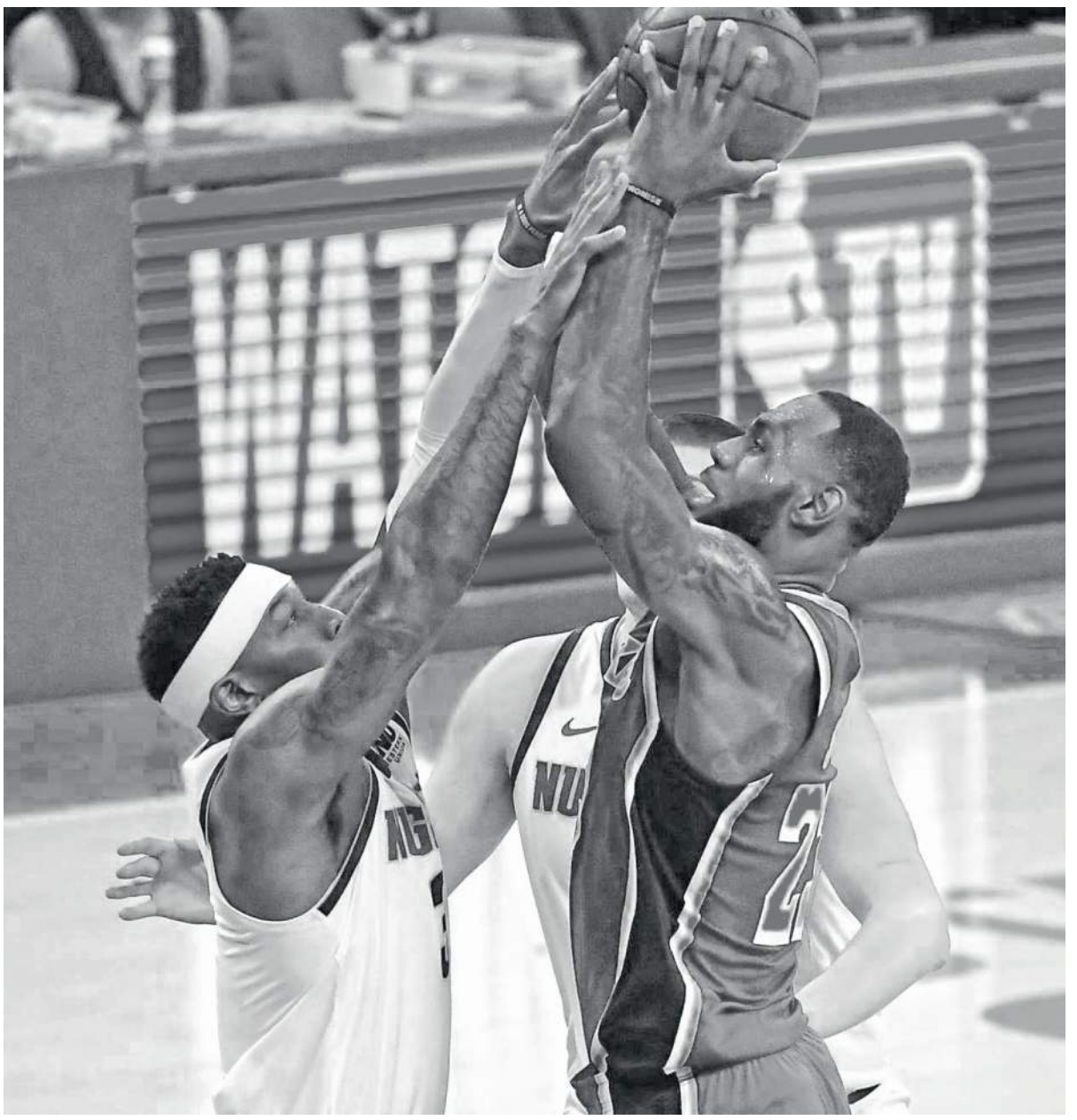
The Lakers will face either Miami or Boston in their 32nd NBA Finals appearance, most in league history. They haven't played for the title since beating the Celtics in 2010 for the last of their 16 titles and hadn't even made the postseason in the last six seasons.

Anthony Davis added 27 points and will end his first season with Los Angeles by playing in his first NBA Finals.

"We battled through a lot this year starting with the beginning of the season and we know the job's not done," Davis said during a trophy presentation in mostly empty arena at Disney World, instead of in front of their fans at Staples Center. "It's a great feeling but we've got four more to win."

Nikola Jokic and Jerami Grant each scored 20 points for the Nuggets, who had fought off elimination six times before the Lakers finally put them away. Jamal Murray added 19 points and eight assists but the star guard struggled with foot pain and lacked his usual explosiveness.

The Nuggets had come back from 3-1 down in the first two rounds before being finally ousted a month since they would have departed the bubble had they lost the first time they faced elimination, in Game 5 against Utah on Aug. 25.



AP

Los Angeles Lakers' LeBron James, right, takes a shot against Denver Nuggets' Torrey Craig (3) during the second half of an NBA conference final playoff game Saturday, Sept. 26, 2020, in Lake Buena Vista, Fla.

"It's not the end goal but to make it as far and surprise as many people as we did, it's a good feeling," Murray said. "So, try to come back next year and try to come back stronger."

Denver fell far behind one more time but James wouldn't allow another comeback. He scored 16 points in the fourth quarter.

"I don't know if I've ever witnessed a guy take over a game the way he did in the fourth quarter tonight in person," Lakers coach Frank Vogel said.

Denver coach Michael Malone noted the difference in experience between his young team and James, who tied Kareem Abdul-Jabbar for third all-time with his 10 finals appearances.

"We were playing against a guy who this is routine for him and so we take some solace in that," Malone said, "and my challenge to our group is that we'll be back."

Only Celtics Hall of Famers Bill Russell, with 12, and Sam Jones with 11 have reached more NBA Finals than James.

The lead was up to 72-56 four minutes into the third with Murray hobbling, but the Nuggets—who were down 15 in the third quarter of Game 5 against Utah and 16 at the same point of Game 5 against the Clippers -- put together a comeback fueled largely by Grant. They came all the way back to tie at 84 on Murray's free throws, before Davis made a 3-pointer with a second to go.

James made consecutive baskets while getting fouled early in the fourth, pushing a two-point lead to 95-88. When Denver made one last push to cut it to four, James set up Danny Green for a 3-pointer for his 10th assist, then made a jumper himself to extend it to 108-99.

Murray said he was battling a bruised foot that didn't improve when he changed sneakers.

The Nuggets became the 16th team in NBA history to lose 10 games in a single postseason. The record is 11, shared by four teams, most recently the 2009 Orlando Magic. They also became the second team to play at least 19 games in a single playoff and finish with a record below .500; they were 9-10, as were the Washington Bullets in the 1979 postseason.

The Lakers have wrapped up all three series in five games. Vogel said it was strange to be playing conference finals games, which usually happen near the end of May.

"Very much so, especially because we are in Florida and it's 90 degrees every day, still," he said. "Somebody told me that it's fall the other day and I didn't really believe them. It's very unusual to be playing playoff basketball in the fall in 90-degree weather."

Celtics: Stop Heat 3's to force Game 7

FLORIDA (AP)—There have been two undeniable truths about the Miami Heat this season.

They must make 3's to win.

They aren't invincible with sizable leads.

The Boston Celtics have scouting and analytics teams that undoubtedly know these trends. But, really, so would anyone who simply can read a boxscore.

Take away Miami's 3's, and the Heat are easier to beat. The Celtics proved that again in Game 5 of the Eastern Conference finals when they extended their season with a victory — and will aim to take the same tact Sunday night when they meet the Heat again in another must-win for Boston.

"They're going to hit some shots, they're going to make some plays," Celtics forward Jayson Tatum said. "They've got some good players. We're just trying to make it as tough as we could."

The Heat have played 87 games this season and shot below 20% from 3-point range in just three of them—one of them being Friday night, when the Celtics prevailed 121-108 to cut Miami's lead in the series to 3-2.

Miami was 7 for 36 from deep, just 19%.

"Regardless of whether it's going in or not, that can't affect your commitment on the other side of the floor," Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said. "And it felt like it did."

The Celtics confined most of their Saturday plans to a film session; the Heat were doing the same along with some optional workouts. Heat center Bam Adebayo, who blamed himself for the Game 5 loss despite teammates saying otherwise, said he would spend some of Saturday on the floor looking for answers.

"This team has good resolve," Celtics coach Brad Stevens said Saturday. "I thought we showed that last night. We'll have to continue to show the ability to be able to handle good and bad throughout a game."

Even though the disappointment was clear Friday night, the Heat still understand where they are: a No. 5 seed, one that didn't even make the playoffs last season, one win from the NBA Finals. Miami needed two tries before ousting Milwaukee in the second round, saying then it learned at what level a team needs to be to win a closeout game.

The Celtics provided them another reminder of that Friday night, when they outscored Miami 70-50 after halftime and erased a 12-point second-quarter deficit.

"As you go on, the wins get harder and harder," Heat guard Duncan Robinson said. "And doing what we want to do and advancing from this round is going to be the hardest thing we've done all season and our in our athletic careers for many of us. Fortunately, we have coaches and guys that have been there and know what it takes.

"But this is certainly a reminder—to think that we were just going to have a good first half and just kind of coast to a victory in this stage of the playoffs, we're misguided for thinking that."

Miami is 55-32 this season, and 18 of those losses have come in games where the Heat held a double-digit lead. Boston has beaten Miami four times this season, rallying from at least 11 points down in three of those games—including a pair of 12-point comebacks in this series.

Miami has lost games this year where it led by 10 points once, 11 (four times), 12 (five times), 13 (once), 14 (twice), 15 (once), 20 (once), 22 (twice) and 23 (once).

For whatever reason, 31.1% is the magic number for Heat 3-pointers this season.

When the Heat shoot 31.1% or worse from beyond the arc, they're 2-17 (.105). When they shoot better than that, they're 53-15 (.779).

Centers Daniel Theis and Enes Kanter gave Boston some big-time numbers in Game 5. Theis played all but 39 seconds of the second half, more time on the floor after halftime than any other Celtic and finished the game with 15 points and 13 rebounds. Kanter added eight points and four rebounds in 10 minutes.

Friday's game featured three players—Bam Adebayo and Jimmy Butler for Miami, Marcus Smart for Boston—finishing with eight rebounds and eight assists. It was the first time a playoff game had three players reach at least eight rebounds and eight assists since April 28, 2005, when Vince Carter and Jason Kidd did it for New Jersey and Dwyane Wade did it for Miami.

Cubs lose, but win NL Central title

AP
Chicago White Sox's Yoan Moncada scores on a three-run double by Jose Abreu as Chicago Cubs catcher Willson Contreras misses the throw during the fourth inning of a baseball game in Chicago, Saturday, Sept. 26, 2020.

CHICAGO (AP)—The White Sox picked up a victory they sorely needed and the Cubs clinched a division championship. Consider it a win-win for Chicago.

Yoan Moncada homered, Jose Abreu hit a three-run double and the playoff-bound White Sox beat the NL Central champion Cubs 9-5 at Guaranteed Rate Field to snap a season-high six-game losing streak Saturday.

The Cubs clinched their third division title in five years when St. Louis lost 3-0 to Milwaukee. They traded high-fives and fist bumps in the dugout after that game ended.

Chicago will be home for a best-of-three series at Wrigley Field beginning Wednesday against an opponent still to be determined.

The White Sox were on their way by the time the Cardinals lost to the Brewers, and remained a game behind AL Central leader Minnesota, with the Twins beating Cincinnati. Chicago also took sole possession of second place, with Cleveland losing to Pittsburgh.

The Cubs won division championships in 2016 and 2017. But they missed the playoffs last season after four straight appearances, and this year hasn't exactly been smooth.

Undecided races

AL Central: The Twins magic number to clinch the AL Central is one after beating the Reds Saturday night. Minnesota needs another win Sunday against Cincinnati or a White Sox loss to the Cubs to make it back-to-back division titles.

The White Sox can also clinch the AL Central on Sunday. Chicago needs a win AND a Twins loss. Chicago owns the tiebreaker over Minnesota based on their intradivision records, which is why the Twins must finish ahead in the final standings. The Indians were eliminated from the division race Saturday after losing to Pittsburgh.

NL Wild Card: Four teams are still alive for the final two spots. One of those spots will go to the winner of Sunday's Brewers-Cardinals game in St. Louis. The losing team is also still alive, but would need both the Giants and Phillies to lose to clinch Sunday.

The Phillies (28-31) are in a must-win situation Sunday. If they win and the Brewers (29-30) and Giants (29-30) both lose, Philadelphia would have the three-way tiebreaker advantage based on division record.

If the Giants win and the Brewers lose, the Giants get in. The Phillies result won't matter.

If the Brewers, Giants and Phillies all lose, the Brewers get in based on the intradivision tiebreaker advantage over the Giants.

If the Cardinals (29-28) lose and the Giants win, the Cardinals will have to play a make up doubleheader in Detroit on Monday to help decide the final spot.

AL East: We're solely focusing on the second-place race here. The Yankees lead the Blue Jays by one game, but the Jays hold the tiebreaker in the event they finished the season even. The winner of this battle will be the No. 6 seed. The loser will drop to No. 8.

Seeding

The top four seeds in the National League are locked in. The Dodgers will be the No. 1 seed and will have "home-field advantage" throughout the playoffs. Of course, that won't mean quite as much if the Dodgers advance to the postseason bubble. The Braves, Cubs and Padres round out the top four in that order. All four teams will host their respective best-of-three Wild Card Series beginning Sept. 30.

The Rays have clinched the AL's best record. They will host the No. 8 seed, which could still be the Yankees or Blue Jays, in the Wild Card Series. The A's, Twins and White Sox are still contention for the No. 2 seed. At 29-30, the Astros are locked into the No. 6 despite having a worse record than the Indians, Yankees and Blue Jays.

Pinstripes earned

Yankees infielder DJ LeMahieu is on the verge of becoming the first player to win undisputed batting titles in both the American and National Leagues. LeMahieu enters the season's final day hitting .359, well ahead of the AL pack. The 32-year-old earned the NL crown when he hit .348 with Colorado in 2016.

Teammate Luke Voit is about to become a more common name atop the leaderboards but part of an illustrious list, joining Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig, Joe DiMaggio, Mickey Mantle, Roger Maris and Alex Rodriguez as New York players to top the majors in home runs. Voit has 22 homers this season, and White Sox slugger Jose Abreu is next with 19.

LeMahieu and Voit could become the first teammates to lead the majors in average and homers since Hank Aaron hit .355 and Eddie Murray slugged 46 homers for the 1959 Milwaukee Braves.

The NL batting title remains up for grabs between Braves MVP contender Freddie Freeman (.341) and Nationals star Juan Soto (.347).

'Big Ben' to set franchise mark for Steelers

PITTSBURGH (AP)—Randy Fichtner watched the big kid with the strong arm and the sense of invincibility that is the province of the very young and immediately grew worried.

So Fichter, then the Pittsburgh Steelers' quarterbacks coach, suggested to Ben Roethlisberger that he might want to think about getting rid of the ball a little sooner. Push the tempo a little faster. Don't take so many risks. Absorb fewer hits.

In other words, play it safe.

"And I'll never forget, he looked at me and says, `Randy, then I wouldn't be me," Fichtner, now Pittsburgh's offensive coordinator, said Thursday. "And from that moment, I knew that there's a reason why he's been Big Ben."

Improbably, all these years later, Roethlisberger is still here. Still playing. Still throwing. Still performing. And while he's learned a thing or two about discretion during his 17 seasons in the league, the 20-something who seemed to welcome the punishment he received on a weekly basis has become the 38-year-old poised to set a mark that's a testament to his durability and his adaptability.

When Roethlisberger runs onto the Heinz Field turf Sunday to lead Pittsburgh (2-0) against Houston (0-2), it will be his 221st game in the NFL. No Steelers player -- not Terry Bradshaw or Joe Greene or Mel Blount or Jerome Bettis or all the rest—has played more games in black-and-gold. Maybe it's fitting that when he takes his first snap, he'll break a tie with Hall of Fame center Mike Webster for the most appearances in franchise history.

Roethlisberger credits his unexpected longevity on his faith and the fact he plays for one of the most stable teams in professional sports. Oh, and being built like a tight end more than a quarterback helps.

"God made me a bigger man than most quarterbacks," Roethlisberger said. "So I think I can take it and I'm just enjoying playing this game."

An appreciation renewed by an unexpected year away from the sport.

Roethlisberger tore three flexor tendons in his right elbow last September and didn't play for 364 days. He could have opted to retire with his two Super Bowl rings, hang out with his wife Ashley and their three children and let the clock start on his likely Hall of Fame induction.

Instead, he opted for (at least) one more go-round, even if it makes him by far the elder statemen on an offense filled with skill position players a decade or more younger. When Roethlisberger came on in Week 2 of the 2004 season to replace an injured Tommy Maddox, rookie wide receiver Chase Claypool was 6. JuJu Smith-Schuster—the longest-tenured receiver on the team—was 7.

"Obviously, he still wants more," Smith-Schuster said.

Whether Roethlisberger would give himself a chance to chase it is another matter. He won his first Super Bowl in 2006 at 23. Four months later, he broke his jaw and nose when he crashed his motorcycle while not wearing a helmet. He developed a reputation as one of the best improvisers in the league, a reputation that often came at a heavy cost as his 6-foot-5, 240-pound frame took shot after shot from opposing defenders.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

MLB STANDINGS

AMERICAN LEAGUE

East	W	L	PCT	GB
y-Tampa Bay	39	20	.661	0.0
x-NY Yankees	33	26	.559	6.0
x-Toronto	32	27	.542	7.0
Baltimore	24	35	.407	15.0
Boston	23	36	.390	16.0
Central				
x-Minnesota	36	23	.610	0.0
x-White Sox	35	24	.593	1.0
x-Cleveland	34	25	.576	2.0
Kansas City	25	34	.424	11.0
Detroit	23	34	.404	12.0
West				
y-Oakland	35	24	.593	0.0
x-Houston	29	30	.492	6.0
Seattle	27	32	.458	8.0
LA Angels	26	33	.441	9.0
Texas	21	38	.356	14.0

NATIONAL LEAGUE

East				
y-Atlanta	35	24	.593	0.0
x-Miami	30	29	.508	5.0
Philadelphia	28	31	.475	7.0
NY Mets	26	33	.441	9.0
Washington	25	34	.424	10.0
Central				
y-Chi Cubs	33	26	.559	0.0
St. Louis	29	28	.509	3.0
x-Cincinnati	30	29	.508	3.0
Milwaukee	29	30	.492	4.0
Pittsburgh	19	40	.322	14.0
West				
y-LA Dodgers	42	17	.712	0.0
x-San Diego	36	23	.610	6.0
San Francisco	29	30	.492	13.0
Colorado	26	33	.441	16.0
Arizona	24	35	.407	18.0

x- clinched playoff spot
y- clinched division

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Djokovic braces for Nadal and Roland Garros demons

PARIS—Novak Djokovic will renew his love-hate relationship with Roland Garros in the knowledge that it is himself rather than seemingly unsettled 12-time champion Rafael Nadal who could pose the greatest threat to winning a second Paris title and 18th Grand Slam crown.

The only man to beat Djokovic in 2020 is Djokovic after the Serb's hair-trigger temper prompted a sensational disqualification from the US Open.

The 33-year-old arrives in the French capital with a 31-1 record this year after his New York brain-fade was followed by a record 36th Masters title in Rome.

Djokovic's 2016 triumph at Roland Garros allowed him to become only the third man after Don Budge and Rod Laver to hold all four Grand Slams at the same time.

Not even Nadal, the holder of 19 majors, or Roger Federer, with a record 20 Slams, can match that staggering achievement.

Federer will miss the French Open as he rehabs his injured knee while Nadal has played just three matches since February, a ring-rustiness evident in his quarter-final exit in Rome.

However, Djokovic refused to get carried away by his chances at Roland Garros ahead of Sunday's start in a wet and chilly Paris.

AP
Novak Djokovic during a training session at Roland Garros Stadium in Paris, France last year.

"It's Nadal," insisted the world number one when pushed on who is the favourite. "You just can't put anybody in front of him."

Djokovic is right to be cautious after experiencing numerous low points on the red clay of Paris.

In the 2012 final against Nadal, having won eight games in a row, he was up a break and pushing to level the match at two sets apiece when rain brought an overnight suspension.

Play resumed the following day but Djokovic's momentum was lost and a double-fault on championship point completed his misery.

Twelve months later, Djokovic was poised for a semifinal win over Nadal with just a routine putaway required to help give him a 5-3 final set lead and a chance to serve for the match.

However, he chose a smash rather than a soothing touch. He tumbled into the net, losing the point and Nadal pounced to eventually take the tie after four hours and 37 minutes.

In 2018, he lost a quarter-final to world number 72 Marco Cecchinato while last year he was beaten in the semi-finals by Dominic Thiem.

That match took two days to complete, featured numerous rain stoppages and winds so strong that a courtside umbrella was sent flying across court.

Djokovic will start his tournament against Sweden's Mikael Ymer, the world number 80.

Nadal, who skipped the defence of his US Open title due to fears over coronavirus, eyes a 13th French Open.

Since his title-winning debut in 2005, the Spaniard has only lost twice at Roland Garros in 95 matches—to Robin Soderling in 2009 and Djokovic in 2015.

Nadal cut an unsettled figure at a pre-tournament press conference on Friday where he admitted the cold and damp conditions forced him to face his "most difficult ever Roland Garros".

He is also unhappy about using a new brand of ball.

"For the health of the players, the ball is super heavy and becomes dangerous for the elbow and for the shoulders," he said.

Nadal begins his campaign against Egor Gerasimov, the 83rd-ranked Belarusian.

The unusual sight of Roland Garros being played in the autumn also means radically different conditions to those expected in its normal time slot of May and June.

Key Day 1 matches

The French Open starts Sunday with only 1,000 spectators allowed on site, questions about whether France's coronavirus cases will continue to rise and the expected debut—with rain forecast—of the new $55 million retractable roof atop Court Philippe Chatrier.

The most-anticipated matchup on Day 1 in the main stadium will be Andy Murray vs Stan Wawrinka in a contest between two men with three Grand Slam titles apiece. Back in 2017, they squared off in the French Open semifinals, and neither has really been quite the same since, each requiring multiple operations. For Murray, now 33, the trouble spot was his hip; for Wawrinka, 35, his knee.

Also on the schedule in Chatrier: No. 1-seeded Simona Halep, the 2018 champion. Over on Court Suzanne Lenglen, 16-year-old American Coco Gauff faces a tough task in her French Open main-draw debut against No. 9 seed Johanna Konta, whose trio of major semifinal appearances include getting that far in Paris last year.

"I feel quite comfortable on clay," Gauff said. "I mean, in my junior career, I had good results on clay."

''I'm very clear on the fact that I'm going (to be) playing another professional tennis player who is one of the best-ranked in the world. It doesn't matter if she's 14 or 40. I think she's there for a reason," the 29-year-old Konta on the matchup.

Also on the Lenglen schedule: U.S. Open runners-up Victoria Azarenka and Alexander Zverev.

NMI

From Page 20

lie Del Corral (152 kg).

In other result in the third round, Kiribati downed Fiji; Australia prevailed over the Solomon Islands; Samoa topped Papua New Guinea; and New Zealand defeated Nauru.

The 2020-2021 Oceania Weightlifting Federation League Email Tournament is being held in celebration of OWF's 40th anniversary and it's a seven-month tournament that started in July and will conclude in January 2021.

After three rounds, Samoa, New Zealand, and Kiribati and unbeaten and are tied for the lead with 9 points apiece. Australia is in solo second place with 7 points, while Nauru, Pacific 1, PNG, and the Solomon Islands have 5 points apiece. Fiji and Pacific 2 are at the bottom of the 10-team field with 3 points each.

Meanwhile, the fourth round will be held on Oct. 2 with CNMI weightlifters competing at the Latte Built Fitness Center in Susupe. The facility also hosted the third round and the CNMI Weightlifting Federation would like to thank Latte Built Fitness Center owner Derek Cutting for accommodating the group anew.

SAIPAN TRIBUNE
In this file photo, women's 81-kg gold medalist Raegine Camacho, left, is joined in the photo by Latte Built Center owner Derek Cutting during the awards ceremony for the Northern Marianas Cup Weightlifting Tournament held last February at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe. Camacho was among the CNMI's three representatives to the third round of the 2020-2021 Oceania Weightlifting Federation League Email Tournament.

ROLLERS

From Page 20

Rollers players and coaches to train under Hawks at Home. Any resources we could get to help develop the skills of our players and coaches are always a blessing to us," Diaz said.

Initially, the program is offering live weekly online classes (every Thursday) via https://basketballacademy.hawks.com/liveclass/. Every class is followed by a Q&A session with the designated Hawks Basketball Academy coach for better understanding. Invited players can also check the previous sessions, while the Hawks at Home will also provide participants a list of skills and drills that players can customized to build their own workout.

"This is a great option for your players to do some home workouts differently from what they have been doing for the past five to six months. New coaches, new drills, new learning," Wall said in an email sent to Diaz.

Rollers players and coaches have been training at home for months due to the pandemic and Diaz said the suggested skills and drills coming for the Hawks Basketball Academy are definitely a great addition to their workout.

Besides its Hawks at Home, the Hawks Basketball Academy also offers players training camps, holds tournaments and coaching clinics, and supports the Special Olympics Georgia.

"We are very excited with the Hawks at Home and UNB programs and we look forward for more opportunities for our players and coaches in the future," the Rollers coach said.

The NMI Rollers Basketball Club has over 100 players divided into different age groups and they compete in various youth leagues in the CNMI and have also played in tournaments in Guam and the Philippines. Rollers players also see action in interscholastic leagues, which won't be kicking off anytime soon due to the pandemic.

Meanwhile, interested Rollers players are required to register at https://basketballacademy.hawks.com/hawks-at-home/ to attend the virtual class.

LeBron, Lakers finish off Nuggets

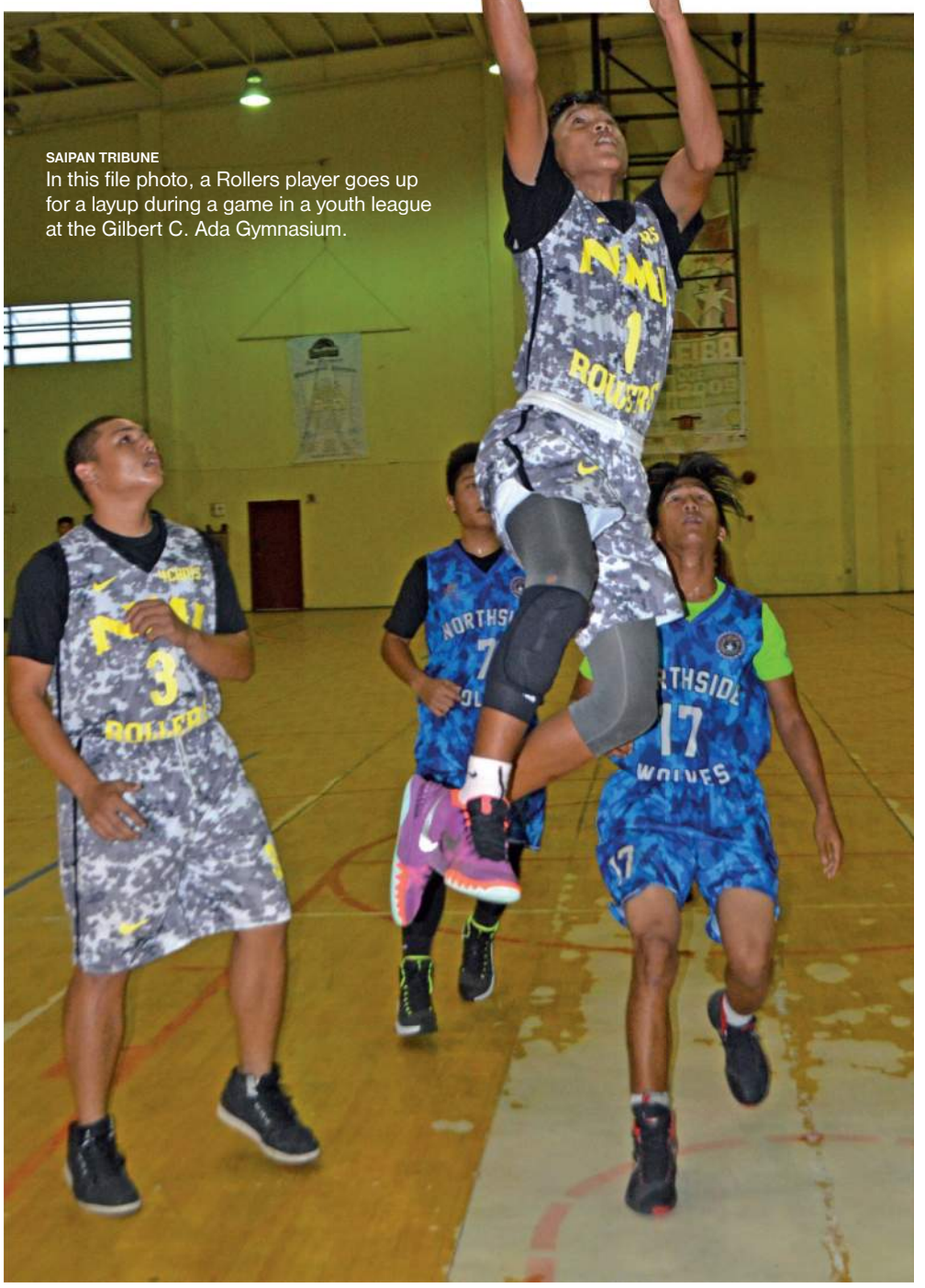
PAGE 17

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Cubs lose, but win NL Central title

PAGE 18

Rollers to train under Hawks program



SAIPAN TRIBUNE
In this file photo, a Rollers player goes up for a layup during a game in a youth league at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
The NMI Rollers Basketball Club players and officials pose with one of the group's supporters, Joe Ayuyu Sr. of McDonald's Saipan and Guam, during a courtesy call before competing in a Guam tournament last year.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The NMI Rollers Basketball Club now has the opportunity to train under the program of a National Basketball Association team.

Rollers co-founder and head coach Joe Diaz said they have been invited to Hawks at Home—a training program of Atlanta Hawks' basketball academy.

"This is a huge opportunity, especially at this time when tournaments are on hold and there are restrictions on training due to the COVID-19 pandemic," said Diaz.

The long-time coach added that they will be able to avail of the program for free because of their affiliation with the Panama-based United Nations of Basketball. UNB, according to its website, was formed this year to promote and maintain international peace through basketball, provide high level competition and sustainable sports development, and deliver humanitarian basketball aid. UNB is under the leadership of American coach and 2010 FIBA Children of the World Basketball Camp director Alan Walls.

"We would like to thank UNB and Alan Walls for extending the invitation for us to join their organization and for making it possible for the

See ROLLERS on Page 19

NMI lifters join virtual tourney

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Three CNMI weightlifters competed in the third round of the 2020-2021 Oceania Weightlifting Federation League Email Tournament held early this month.

Leo Apelo, Deion Sabino, and Raegine Camacho suited up for Pacific Team 2, joining forces with representatives from the Federated States of Micronesia, New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Palau, and Guam. Other OWF member-countries formed their own team, while smaller island groups combined their athletes with Pacific Team 1 made up of weightlifters from the Cook Islands, Tahiti, American Samoa, Tong, Niue, and Wallis & Futuna.

Pacific 1 and 2 crossed paths in the third round with the former winning by 208.90 kg. Each team's scores were determined by subtracting the team's total bodyweight from the aggregate total (the 14 members combined record in snatch and clean and jerk). Pacific 1 registered 2,944 kg aggregate total and had a bodyweight of 1,341 kg for 1,603 kg against Pacific 2's 1,394.10 kg (2,469 kg aggregate minus bodyweight of 1,074.90 kg).

Apelo, with body weight of 100 kg, posted 110 kg and 145 kg in the snatch and clean & jerk, respectively. Sabino, who hit the scales at 86.90 kg, tallied 70 kg in the snatch and 85 in the clean & jerk, while Camacho, with bodyweight of 78 kg, logged 65 kg in the snatch and 82 in the clean & jerk.

Apelo had the best aggregate total in Pacific Team 2's men's crew with his 255 kg, followed by Palau's Stevick Patris (250 kg) and New Caledonia's Kyle Michel (242) kg. In the women's division, the Top 3 were Guam's Brittney Pereda (170 kg) and Armie Almazan (162 kg) and New Caledonia's Ju-

See NMI on Page 19

SAIPAN TRIBUNE
In this file photo, Deion Sabino is seen here competing in the Northern Marianas Cup Weightlifting Tournament last Februrary at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe.